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"*The Story of our Lives from Year to Year.*"—Shakespeare.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A Weekly Journal.

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

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No. 477.] SATURDAY, JUNE 13, 1868. [Price 2d.

THE MOONSTONE.

By the Author of "The Woman in White," &c. &c.

Second Period. The Discovery of the Truth. (1848—1849.)

Third Narrative.

The Narrative of Franklin Blake.

CHAPTER V.

Having told me the name of Mr. Candy's assistant, Betteredge appeared to think that we had wasted enough of our time on an insignificant subject. He resumed the perusal of Rosanna Spearman's letter.

On my side, I sat at the window, waiting until he had done. Little by little, the impression produced on me by Ezra Jennings—it seemed perfectly unaccountable, in such a situation as mine, that any human being should have produced an impression on me at all!—faded from my mind. My thoughts flowed back into their former channel. Once more, I forced myself to look my own incredible position resolutely in the face. Once more, I reviewed in my own mind the course which I had at last summoned composure enough to plan out for the future.

To go back to London that day; to put the whole case before Mr. Bruff; and, last and most important, to obtain (no matter by what means or at what sacrifice) a personal interview with Rachel—this was my plan of action, so far as I was capable of forming it at the time. There was more than an hour still to spare before the train started. And there was the bare chance that Betteredge might discover something in the unread portion of Rosanna Spearman's letter, which it might be useful for me to know before I left the house in which the Diamond had been lost. For that chance I was now waiting.

The letter ended in these terms:

"You have no need to be angry, Mr. Franklin, even if I did feel some little triumph at knowing that I held all your prospects in life in my own hands. Anxieties and fears soon came back to me. With the view Sergeant Cuff took of the loss of the Diamond, he would be sure to end in examining our linen and our dresses. There was no place in my room—there was no place in the house—which I could feel satisfied would be safe from him. How to hide the nightgown so that not even the Sergeant could find it? and how to do that without losing one moment of precious time?—these were not easy questions to answer. My uncertainties ended in my taking a way that may make you laugh. I undressed, and put the nightgown on me. You had worn it—and I had another little moment of pleasure in wearing it after you.

"The next news that reached us in the servants' hall showed that I had not made sure of the nightgown a moment too soon. Sergeant Cuff wanted to see the washing-book.

"I found it, and took it to him in my lady's sitting-room. The Sergeant and I had come across each other more than once in former days. I was certain he would know me again—and I was *not* certain of what he might do when he found me employed as servant in a house in which a valuable jewel had been lost. In this suspense, I felt it would be a relief to me to get the meeting between us over, and to know the worst of it at once.

"He looked at me as if I was a stranger, when I handed him the washing-book; and he was very specially polite in thanking me for bringing it. I thought those were both bad signs. There was no knowing what he might say of me behind my back; there was no knowing how soon I might not find myself taken in custody on suspicion, and searched. It was then time for your return from seeing Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite off by the railway; and I went to your favourite walk in the shrubbery, to try for another chance of speaking to you—the last chance, for all I knew to the contrary, that I might have.

"You never appeared; and, what was worse still, Mr. Betteredge and Sergeant Cuff passed by the place where I was hiding—and the Sergeant saw me.

"I had no choice, after that, but to return to my proper place and my proper work, before more disasters happened to me. Just as I was going to step across the path, you came back from the railway. You were making straight for the shrubbery, when you saw me—I am certain, sir, you saw me—and you turned away

as if I had got the plague, and went into the house.*

"I made the best of my way indoors again, returning by the servants' entrance. There was nobody in the laundry-room at that time; and I sat down there alone. I have told you already of the thoughts which the Shivering Sand put into my head. Those thoughts came back to me now. I wondered in myself which it would be hardest to do, if things went on in this way—to bear Mr. Franklin Blake's indifference to me, or to jump into the quicksand and end it for ever in that way?

"It's useless to ask me to account for my own conduct, at this time. I try—and I can't understand it myself.

"Why didn't I stop you, when you avoided me in that cruel manner? Why didn't I call out, 'Mr. Franklin, I have got something to say to you; it concerns yourself, and you must, and shall, hear it'? You were at my mercy—I had got the whip-hand of you, as they say. And better than that, I had the means (if I could only make you trust me) of being useful to you in the future. Of course, I never supposed that you—a gentleman—had stolen the Diamond for the mere pleasure of stealing it. No. Penelope had heard Miss Rachel, and I had heard Mr. Betteredge, talk about your extravagance and your debts. It was plain enough to me that you had taken the Diamond to sell it, or pledge it, and so to get the money of which you stood in need. Well! I could have told you of a man in London who would have advanced a good large sum on the jewel, and who would have asked no awkward questions about it either.

"Why didn't I speak to you! why didn't I speak to you!

"I wonder whether the risks and difficulties of keeping the nightgown were as much as I could manage, without having other risks and difficulties added to them? This might have been the case with some women—but how could it be the case with me? In the days when I was a thief, I had run fifty times greater risks, and found my way out of difficulties to which *this* difficulty was mere child's play. I had been apprenticed, as you may say, to frauds and deceptions—some of them on such a grand scale, and managed so cleverly, that they became famous, and appeared in the newspapers. Was such a little thing as the keeping of the nightgown likely to weigh on my spirits, and to set my heart sinking within me, at the time when I ought to have spoken to you? What nonsense to ask the question! the thing couldn't be.

"Where is the use of my dwelling in this way on my own folly? The plain truth is plain enough, surely? Behind your back, I loved you with all my heart and soul. Before your face—there's no denying it—I was frightened of you; frightened of making you angry with me; frightened of what you might say to me (though you *had* taken the Diamond) if I presumed to tell you that I had found it out. I had gone as near to it as I dared when I spoke to you in the library. You had not turned your back on me then. You had not started away from me as if I had got the plague. I tried to provoke myself into feeling angry with you, and to rouse up my courage in that way. No! I couldn't feel anything but the misery and the mortification of it. 'You're a plain girl; you have got a crooked shoulder; you're only a housemaid—what do you mean by attempting to speak to Me?' You never uttered a word of that, Mr. Franklin; but you said it all to me, nevertheless! Is such madness as this to be accounted for? No. There is nothing to be done but to confess it, and let it be.

"I ask your pardon, once more, for this wandering of my pen. There is no fear of its happening again. I am close at the end now.

"The first person who disturbed me by coming into the empty room was Penelope. She had found out my secret long since, and she had done her best to bring me to my senses—and done it kindly too.

"'Ah!' she said, 'I know why you're sitting here, and fretting, all by yourself. The best thing that can happen for your advantage, Rosanna, will be for Mr. Franklin's visit here to come to an end. It's my belief that he won't be long now before he leaves the house.'

"In all my thoughts of you I had never thought of your going away. I couldn't speak to Penelope. I could only look at her.

"'I've just left Miss Rachel,' Penelope went on. 'And a hard matter I have had of it to put up with her temper. She says the house is unbearable to her with the police in it; and she's determined to speak to my lady this evening, and to go to her Aunt Ablewhite to-morrow. If she does that, Mr. Franklin will be the next to find a reason for going away, you may depend on it!'

"I recovered the use of my tongue at that. 'Do you mean to say Mr. Franklin will go with her?' I asked.

"'Only too gladly, if she would let him; but she won't. *He* has been made to feel her temper; *he* is in her black books too—and that after having done all he can to help her, poor fellow! No, no! If they don't make it up before to-morrow, you will see Miss Rachel go one way, and Mr. Franklin another. Where he may betake himself to I can't say. But he will never stay here, Rosanna, after Miss Rachel has left us.'

"I managed to master the despair I felt at the prospect of your going away. To own the truth, I saw a little glimpse of hope for myself if there was really a serious disagreement between Miss Rachel and you. 'Do you know,' I asked, 'what the quarrel is between them?'

* NOTE; by Franklin Blake.—The writer is entirely mistaken, poor creature. I never noticed her. My intention was certainly to have taken a turn in the shrubbery. But, remembering at the same moment that my aunt might wish to see me, after my return from the railway, I altered my mind, and went into the house.

"'It's all on Miss Rachel's side,' Penelope said. 'And, for anything I know to the contrary, it's all Miss Rachel's temper, and nothing else. I am loath to distress you, Rosanna; but don't run away with the notion that Mr. Franklin is ever likely to quarrel with *her*. He's a great deal too fond of her for that!'

"She had only just spoken those cruel words when there came a call to us from Mr. Betteredge. All the indoor servants were to assemble in the hall. And then we were to go in, one by one, and be questioned in Mr. Betteredge's room by Sergeant Cuff.

"It came to my turn to go in, after her ladyship's maid and the upper housemaid had been questioned first. Sergeant Cuff's inquiries—though he wrapped them up very cunningly—soon showed me that those two women (the bitterest enemies I had in the house) had made their discoveries outside my door, on the Thursday afternoon, and again on the Thursday night. They had told the Sergeant enough to open his eyes to some part of the truth. He rightly believed me to have made a new nightgown secretly, but he wrongly believed the paint-stained nightgown to be mine. I felt satisfied of another thing, from what he said, which it puzzled me to understand. He suspected me, of course, of being concerned in the disappearance of the Diamond. But, at the same time, he let me see—purposely, as I thought—that he did not consider me as the person chiefly answerable for the loss of the jewel. He appeared to think that I had been acting under the direction of somebody else. Who that person might be, I couldn't guess then, and can't guess now.

"In this uncertainty, one thing was plain—that Sergeant Cuff was miles away from knowing the whole truth. You were safe as long as the nightgown was safe—and not a moment longer.

"I quite despair of making you understand the distress and terror which pressed upon me now. It was impossible for me to risk wearing your nightgown any longer. I might find myself taken off, at a moment's notice, to the police court at Frizinghall, to be charged on suspicion, and searched accordingly. While Sergeant Cuff still left me free, I had to choose—and that at once—between destroying the nightgown, or hiding it in some safe place, at some safe distance from the house.

"If I had only been a little less fond of you, I think I should have destroyed it. But, oh! how could I destroy the only thing I had which proved that I had saved you from discovery? If we did come to an explanation together, and if you suspected me of having some bad motive, and denied it all, how could I win upon you to trust me, unless I had the nightgown to produce? Was it wronging you to believe, as I did, and do still, that you might hesitate to let a poor girl like me be the sharer of your secret, and your accomplice in the theft which your money-troubles had tempted you to commit? Think of your cold behaviour to me, sir, and you will hardly wonder at my unwillingness to destroy the only claim on your confidence and your gratitude which it was my fortune to possess.

"I determined to hide it; and the place I fixed on was the place I knew best—the Shivering Sand.

"As soon as the questioning was over, I made the first excuse that came into my head, and got leave to go out for a breath of fresh air. I went straight to Cobb's Hole, to Mr. Yolland's cottage. His wife and daughter were the best friends I had. Don't suppose I trusted them with your secret—I have trusted nobody. All I wanted was to write this letter to you, and to have a safe opportunity of taking the nightgown off me. Suspected as I was, I could do neither of those things, with any sort of security, up at the house.

"And now I have nearly got through my long letter, writing it alone in Lucy Yolland's bedroom. When it is done I shall go down-stairs with the nightgown rolled up, and hidden under my cloak. I shall find the means I want for keeping it safe and dry in its hiding-place, among the litter of old things in Mrs. Yolland's kitchen. And then I shall go to the Shivering Sand—don't be afraid of my letting my footmarks betray me!—and hide the nightgown down in the sand, where no living creature can find it without being first let into the secret by myself.

"And, when that is done, what then?

"Then, Mr. Franklin, I shall have two reasons for making another attempt to say the words to you which I have not said yet. If you leave the house, as Penelope believes you will leave it, and if I haven't spoken to you before that, I shall lose my opportunity for ever. That is one reason. Then, again, there is the comforting knowledge—if my speaking does make you angry—that I have got the nightgown ready to plead my cause for me as nothing else can. That is my other reason. If these two together don't harden my heart against the coldness which has hitherto frozen it up (I mean the coldness of your treatment of me), there will be the end of my efforts—and the end of my life.

"Yes. If I miss my next opportunity—if you are as cruel as ever, and if I feel it again as I have felt it already—good-bye to the world which has grudged me the happiness that it gives to others. Good-bye to life, which nothing but a little kindness from *you* can ever make pleasurable to me again. Don't blame yourself, sir, if it ends in this way. But try—do try—to feel some forgiving sorrow for me! I shall take care that you find out what I have done for you, when I am past telling you of it myself. Will you say something kind of me then—in the same gentle way that you have when you speak to Miss Rachel? If you do that, and if there are such things as ghosts, I believe my ghost will hear it, and tremble with the pleasure of it.

"It's time I left off. I am making myself

cry. How am I to see my way to the hiding-place if I let these useless tears come and blind me?

"Besides, why should I look at the gloomy side? Why not believe, while I can, that it will end well after all? I may find you in a good humour to-night—or, if not, I may succeed better to-morrow morning. I shan't improve my poor plain face by fretting—shall I? Who knows but I may have filled all these weary long pages of paper for nothing? They will go, for safety's sake (never mind now for what other reason) into the hiding-place, along with the nightgown. It has been hard, hard work writing my letter. Oh! if we only end in understanding each other, how I shall enjoy tearing it up!

"I beg to remain, sir, your true lover and humble servant,

"Rosanna Spearman."

The reading of the letter was completed by Betteredge in silence. After carefully putting it back in the envelope, he sat thinking, with his head bowed down, and his eyes on the ground.

"Betteredge," I said, "is there any hint to guide us at the end of the letter?"

He looked up slowly, with a heavy sigh.

"There is nothing to guide you, Mr. Franklin," he answered. "If you will take my advice, you will keep the letter in the cover till these present anxieties of yours have come to an end. It will sorely distress you, whenever you read it. Don't read it now."

I put the letter away in my pocket-book.

A glance back at the sixteenth and seventeenth chapters of Betteredge's Narrative will show that there really was a reason for my thus sparing myself, at a time when my fortitude had been already cruelly tried. Twice over, the unhappy woman had made her last attempt to speak to me. And twice over, it had been my misfortune (God knows how innocently!) to repel the advances she had made to me. On the Friday night, as Betteredge truly describes it, she had found me alone at the billiard table. Her manner and her language had suggested to me—and would have suggested to any man, under the circumstances—that she was about to confess a guilty knowledge of the disappearance of the Diamond. For her own sake, I had purposely shown no special interest in what was coming; for her own sake, I had purposely looked at the billiard balls, instead of looking at *her*—and what had been the result? I had sent her away from me, wounded to the heart! On the Saturday again—on the day when she must have foreseen, after what Penelope had told her, that my departure was close at hand—the same fatality still pursued us. She had once more attempted to meet me in the shrubbery walk, and she had found me there in company with Betteredge and Sergeant Cuff. In her hearing, the Sergeant, with his own underhand object in view, had appealed to my interest in Rosanna Spearman. Again for the poor creature's own sake, I had met the police-officer with a flat denial, and had declared—loudly declared, so that she might hear *me* too—that I felt "no interest whatever in Rosanna Spearman." At those words, solely designed to warn her against attempting to gain my private ear, she had turned away, and left the place: cautioned of her danger, as I then believed; self-doomed to destruction, as I know now. From that point, I have already traced the succession of events which led me to the astounding discovery at the quicksand. The retrospect is now complete. I may leave the miserable story of Rosanna Spearman—to which, even at this distance of time, I cannot revert without a pang of distress—to suggest for itself all that is here purposely left unsaid. I may pass from the suicide at the Shivering Sand, with its strange and terrible influence on my present position and my future prospects, to interests which concern the living people of this narrative, and to events which were already paving my way for the slow and toilsome journey from the darkness to the light.

CHAPTER VI.

I walked to the railway station accompanied, it is needless to say, by Gabriel Betteredge. I had the letter in my pocket, and the nightgown safely packed in a little bag—both to be submitted, before I slept that night, to the investigation of Mr. Bruff.

We left the house in silence. For the first time in my experience of him, I found old Betteredge in my company without a word to say to me. Having something to say on my side, I opened the conversation as soon as we were clear of the lodge gates.

"Before I go to London," I began, "I have two questions to ask you. They relate to myself, and I believe they will rather surprise you."

"If they will put that poor creature's letter out of my head, Mr. Franklin, they may do anything else they like with me. Please to begin surprising me, sir, as soon as you can."

"My first question, Betteredge, is this. Was I drunk on the night of Rachel's birthday?"

"*You* drunk!" exclaimed the old man. "Why it's the great defect of your character, Mr. Franklin, that you only drink with your dinner, and never touch a drop of liquor afterwards!"

"But the birthday was a special occasion. I might have abandoned my regular habits, on that night of all others."

Betteredge considered for a moment.

"You did go out of your habits, sir," he said. "And I'll tell you how. You looked wretchedly ill — and we persuaded you to have a drop of brandy and water to cheer you up a little."

"I am not used to brandy and water. It is quite possible——"

"Wait a bit, Mr. Franklin. I knew you were not used, too. I poured you out half a wine-glass-full of our fifty-year-old Cognac; and (more shame for me!) I drowned that noble

liquor in nigh on a tumbler-full of cold water. A child couldn't have got drunk on it—let alone a grown man!"

I knew I could depend on his memory, in a matter of this kind. It was plainly impossible that I could have been intoxicated. I passed on to the second question.

"Before I was sent abroad, Betteredge, you saw a great deal of me when I was a boy? Now tell me plainly, do you remember anything strange of me, after I had gone to bed at night? Did you ever discover me walking in my sleep?"

Betteredge stopped, looked at me for a moment, nodded his head, and walked on again.

"I see your drift now, Mr. Franklin!" he said. "You're trying to account for how you got the paint on your nightgown, without knowing it yourself. It won't do, sir. You're miles away still from getting at the truth. Walk in your sleep? You never did such a thing in your life!"

Here again, I felt that Betteredge must be right. Neither at home nor abroad had my life ever been of the solitary sort. If I had been a sleep-walker, there were hundreds on hundreds of people who must have discovered me, and who, in the interests of my own safety, would have warned me of the habit, and have taken precautions to restrain it.

Still, admitting all this, I clung — with an obstinacy which was surely natural and excusable, under the circumstances—to one or other of the only two explanations that I could see which accounted for the unendurable position in which I then stood. Observing that I was not yet satisfied, Betteredge shrewdly adverted to certain later events in the history of the Moonstone; and scattered both my theories to the winds at once and for ever.

"Let's try it another way, sir," he said. "Keep your own opinion, and see how far it will take you towards finding out the truth. If we are to believe the nightgown—which I don't, for one—you not only smeared off the paint from the door, without knowing it, but you also took the Diamond without knowing it. Is that right, so far?"

"Quite right. Go on."

"Very good, sir. We'll say you were drunk, or walking in your sleep, when you took the jewel. That accounts for the night and morning, after the birthday. But how does it account for what has happened since that time? The Diamond has been taken to London, since that time. The Diamond has been pledged to Mr. Luker, since that time. Did you do those two things, without knowing it, too? Were you drunk when I saw you off in the pony-chaise on that Saturday evening? And did you walk in your sleep to Mr. Luker's, when the train had brought you to your journey's end? Excuse me for saying it, Mr. Franklin, but this business has so upset you, that you're not fit yet to judge for yourself. The sooner you lay your head alongside of Mr. Bruff's head, the sooner you will see your way out of the dead lock that has got you now."

We reached the station, with only a minute or two to spare.

I hurriedly gave Betteredge my address in London, so that he might write to me, if necessary; promising, on my side, to inform him of any news which I might have to communicate. This done, and just as I was bidding him farewell, I happened to glance towards the book-and-newspaper stall. There was Mr. Candy's remarkable-looking assistant again, speaking to the keeper of the stall! Our eyes met at the same moment. Ezra Jennings took off his hat to me. I returned the salute, and got into a carriage just as the train started. It was a relief to my mind, I suppose, to dwell on any subject which appeared to be, personally, of no sort of importance to me. At all events, I began the momentous journey back which was to take me to Mr. Bruff, wondering—absurdly enough, I admit—that I should have seen the man with the piebald hair twice in one day!

The hour at which I arrived in London precluded all hope of my finding Mr. Bruff at his place of business. I drove from the railway to his private residence at Hampstead, and disturbed the old lawyer dozing alone in his dining-room, with his favourite pug-dog on his lap, and his bottle of wine at his elbow.

I shall best describe the effect which my story produced on the mind of Mr. Bruff by relating his proceedings when he had heard it to the end. He ordered lights, and strong tea, to be taken into his study; and he sent a message to the ladies of his family, forbidding them to disturb us on any pretence whatever. These preliminaries disposed of, he first examined the nightgown, and then devoted himself to the reading of Rosanna Spearman's letter.

The reading completed, Mr. Bruff addressed me for the first time since we had been shut up together in the seclusion of his own room.

"Franklin Blake," said the old gentleman, "this is a very serious matter, in more respects than one. In my opinion, it concerns Rachel quite as nearly as it concerns you. Her extraordinary conduct is no mystery *now*. She believes you have stolen the Diamond."

I had shrunk from reasoning my own way fairly to that revolting conclusion. But it had forced itself on me nevertheless. My resolution to obtain a personal interview with Rachel, rested really and truly on the ground just stated by Mr. Bruff.

"The first step to take in this investigation," the lawyer proceeded, "is to appeal to Rachel. She has been silent all this time, from motives which I (who know her character) can readily understand. It is impossible, after what has happened, to submit to that silence any longer. She must be persuaded to tell us, or she must be forced to tell us, on what grounds she bases her belief that you took the Moonstone. The chances are, that the whole of this case, serious

as it seems now, will tumble to pieces, if we can only break through Rachel's inveterate reserve, and prevail upon her to speak out."

"That is a very comforting opinion for *me*," I said. "I own I should like to know——"

"You would like to know how I can justify it," interposed Mr. Bruff. "I can tell you in two minutes. Understand, in the first place, that I look at this matter from a lawyer's point of view. It's a question of evidence, with me. Very well. The evidence breaks down, at the outset, on one important point."

"On what point?"

"You shall hear. I admit that the mark of the name proves the nightgown to be your's. I admit that the mark of the paint proves the nightgown to have made the smear on Rachel's door. But what evidence is there, before you or before me, to prove that you are the person who wore the nightgown?"

The objection electrified me. It had never occurred to my mind until that moment.

"As to this," pursued the lawyer, taking up Rosanna Spearman's confession, "I can understand that the letter is a distressing one to *you*. I can understand that you may hesitate to analyse it from a purely impartial point of view. But *I* am not in your position. I can bring my professional experience to bear on this document, just as I should bring it to bear on any other. Without alluding to the woman's career as a thief, I will merely remark that her letter proves her to have been an adept at deception, on her own showing; and I argue from that, that I am justified in suspecting her of not having told the whole truth. I won't start any theory, at present, as to what she may or may not have done. I will only say that, if Rachel has suspected you *on the evidence of the nightgown only*, the chances are ninety-nine to a hundred that Rosanna Spearman was the person who showed it to her. In that case, there is the woman's letter, confessing that she was jealous of Rachel, confessing that she changed the roses, confessing that she saw a glimpse of hope for herself, in the prospect of a quarrel between Rachel and you. I don't stop to ask who took the Moonstone (as a means to her end, Rosanna Spearman would have taken fifty Moonstones)—I only say that the disappearance of the jewel gave this reclaimed thief who was in love with you, an opportunity of setting you and Rachel at variance for the rest of your lives. She had not decided on destroying herself, *then*, remember; and, having the opportunity, I distinctly assert that it was in her character, and in her position at the time, to take it. What do you say to that?"

"Some such suspicion," I answered, "crossed my own mind, as soon as I opened the letter."

"Exactly! And when you had read the letter, you pitied the poor creature, and couldn't find it in your heart to suspect her. Does you credit, my dear sir—does you credit!"

"But suppose it turns out that I did wear the nightgown? What then?"

"I don't see how that fact is to be proved," said Mr. Bruff. "But assuming the proof to be possible, the vindication of your innocence would be no easy matter. We won't go into that, now. Let us wait and see whether Rachel hasn't suspected you on the evidence of the nightgown only."

"Good God, how coolly you talk of Rachel suspecting me!" I broke out. "What right has she to suspect Me, on any evidence, of being a thief?"

"A very sensible question, my dear sir. Rather hotly put—but well worth considering for all that. What puzzles you, puzzles me too. Search your memory, and tell me this. Did anything happen while you were staying at the house—not, of course, to shake Rachel's belief in your honour—but, let us say, to shake her belief (no matter with how little reason) in your principles generally?"

I started, in ungovernable agitation, to my feet. The lawyer's question reminded me, for the first time since I had left England, that something *had* happened.

In the eighth chapter of Betteredge's Narrative, an allusion will be found to the arrival of a foreigner and a stranger at my aunt's house, who came to see me on business. The nature of his business was this.

I had been foolish enough (being, as usual, straightened for money at the time) to accept a loan from the keeper of a small restaurant in Paris, to whom I was well known as a customer. A time was settled between us for paying the money back; and when the time came, I found it (as thousands of other honest men have found it) impossible to keep my engagement. I sent the man a bill. My name was unfortunately too well known on such documents: he failed to negotiate it. His affairs had fallen into disorder, in the interval since I had borrowed of him; bankruptcy stared him in the face; and a relative of his, a French lawyer, came to England to find me, and to insist on the payment of my debt. He was a man of violent temper; and he took the wrong way with me. High words passed on both sides; and my aunt and Rachel were unfortunately in the next room, and heard us. Lady Verinder came in, and insisted on knowing what was the matter. The Frenchman produced his credentials, and declared me to be responsible for the ruin of a poor man, who had trusted in my honour. My aunt instantly paid him the money, and sent him off. She knew me better of course than to take the Frenchman's view of the transaction. But she was shocked at my carelessness, and justly angry with me for placing myself in a position, which, but for her interference, might have become a very disgraceful one. Either her mother told her, or Rachel heard what passed—I can't say which. She took her own romantic, high-flown view of the matter. I was "heartless"; I was "dishonourable"; I had "no principle"; there was "no knowing what I might do next"—in short, she said some of the severest things to me which I had ever heard from a young lady's lips. The breach between us lasted for the

whole of the next day. The day after, I succeeded in making my peace, and thought no more of it. Had Rachel reverted to this unlucky accident, at the critical moment when my place in her estimation was again, and far more seriously, assailed? Mr. Bruff, when I had mentioned the circumstances to him, answered that question at once in the affirmative.

"It would have its effect on her mind," he said gravely. "And I wish, for your sake, the thing had not happened. However, we have discovered that there *was* a predisposing influence against you—and there is one uncertainty cleared out of our way, at any rate. I see nothing more that we can do now. Our next step in this inquiry must be the step that takes us to Rachel."

He rose, and began walking thoughtfully up and down the room. Twice, I was on the point of telling him that I had determined on seeing Rachel personally; and twice, having regard to his age and his character, I hesitated to take him by surprise at an unfavourable moment.

"The grand difficulty is," he resumed, "how to make her show her whole mind in this matter, without reserve. Have you any suggestion to offer?"

"I have made up my mind, Mr. Bruff, to speak to Rachel myself."

"You!" He suddenly stopped in his walk, and looked at me as if he thought I had taken leave of my senses. "You, of all the people in the world!" He abruptly checked himself, and took another turn in the room. "Wait a little," he said. "In cases of this extraordinary kind, the rash way is sometimes the best way." He considered the question for a moment or two, under that new light, and ended boldly by a decision in my favour. "Nothing venture, nothing have," the old gentleman resumed. "You have a chance in your favour which I don't possess—and you shall be the first to try the experiment."

"A chance in my favour?" I repeated, in the greatest surprise.

Mr. Bruff's face softened, for the first time, into a smile.

"This is how it stands," he said. "I tell you fairly, I don't trust your discretion, and I don't trust your temper. But I do trust in Rachel's still preserving, in some remote little corner of her heart, a certain perverse weakness for *you*. Touch that—and trust to the consequences for the fullest disclosure that can flow from a woman's lips! The question is—how are you to see her?"

"She has been a guest of your's at this house," I answered. "May I venture to suggest—if nothing was said about me beforehand—that I might see her here?"

"Cool!" said Mr. Bruff. With that one word of comment on the reply that I had made to him, he took another turn up and down the room.

"In plain English," he said, "my house is to be turned into a trap to catch Rachel; with a bait to tempt her, in the shape of an invitation from my wife and daughters. If you were anybody else but Franklin Blake, and if this matter was one atom less serious than it really is, I should refuse point-blank. As things are, I firmly believe Rachel will live to thank me for turning traitor to her in my old age. Consider me your accomplice. Rachel shall be asked to spend the day here; and you shall receive due notice of it."

"When? To-morrow?"

"To-morrow won't give us time enough to get her answer. Say the day after."

"How shall I hear from you?"

"Stay at home all the morning and expect me to call on you."

I thanked him for the inestimable assistance which he was rendering to me, with the gratitude which I really felt; and, declining a hospitable invitation to sleep that night at Hampstead, returned to my lodgings in London.

Of the day that followed, I have only to say that it was the longest day of my life. Innocent as I knew myself to be, certain as I was that the abominable imputation which rested on me must sooner or later be cleared off, there was nevertheless a sense of self-abasement in my mind which instinctively disinclined me to see any of my friends. We often hear (almost invariably, however, from superficial observers) that guilt can look like innocence. I believe it to be infinitely the truer axiom of the two that innocence can look like guilt. I caused myself to be denied, all day, to every visitor who called; and I only ventured out under cover of the night.

The next morning, Mr. Bruff surprised me at the breakfast table. He handed me a large key, and announced that he felt ashamed of himself for the first time in his life.

"Is she coming?"

"She is coming to-day, to lunch and spend the afternoon with my wife and my girls."

"Are Mrs. Bruff, and your daughters, in the secret?"

"Inevitably. But women, as you may have observed, have no principles. My family don't feel my pangs of conscience. The end being to bring you and Rachel together again, my wife and daughters pass over the means employed to gain it, as composedly as if they were Jesuits."

"I am infinitely obliged to them. What is this key?"

"The key of the gate in my back-garden wall. Be there at three this afternoon. Let yourself into the garden, and make your way in by the conservatory door. Cross the small drawing-room, and open the door in front of you which leads into the music-room. There, you will find Rachel—and find her, alone."

"How can I thank you!"

"I will tell you how. Don't blame *me* for what happens afterwards."

With those words, he went out.

I had many weary hours still to wait through. To while away the time, I looked at my letters Among them was a letter from Betteredge.

I opened it eagerly. To my surprise and disappointment, it began with an apology warning me to expect no news of any importance. In the next sentence the everlasting Ezra Jennings appeared again! He had stopped Betteredge on the way out of the station, and had asked who I was. Informed on this point, he had mentioned having seen me to his master, Mr. Candy. Mr. Candy hearing of this, had himself driven over to Betteredge, to express his regret at our having missed each other. He had a reason for wishing particularly to speak to me; and when I was next in the neighbourhood of Frizinghall, he begged I would let him know. Apart from a few characteristic utterances of the Betteredge philosophy, this was the sum and substance of my correspondent's letter. The warm-hearted, faithful old man acknowledged that he had written "mainly for the pleasure of writing to me."

I crumpled up the letter in my pocket, and forgot it the moment after, in the all-absorbing interest of my coming interview with Rachel.

As the clock of Hampstead church struck three, I put Mr. Bruff's key into the lock of the door in the wall. When I first stepped into the garden, and while I was securing the door again on the inner side, I own to having felt a certain guilty doubtfulness about what might happen next. I looked furtively on either side of me, suspicious of the presence of some unexpected witness in some unknown corner of the garden. Nothing appeared, to justify my apprehensions. The walks were, one and all, solitudes; and the birds and the bees were the only witnesses.

I passed through the garden; entered the conservatory; and crossed the small drawing-room. As I laid my hand on the door opposite, I heard a few plaintive chords struck on the piano in the room within. She had often idled over the instrument in this way, when I was staying at her mother's house. I was obliged to wait a little, to steady myself. The past and present rose, side by side, at that supreme moment—and the contrast shook me.

After the lapse of a few moments, I roused my manhood, and opened the door.

CREATURES OF THE SEA.

The Land World is wide, but the Ocean World is wider. To cut short all embarrassment of choice and the difficulty of knowing where to begin, suppose we take our familiar friend the oyster; first reproaching him with getting dearer and dearer every season. Time was—a very long while ago—when nobody would look at him, much less take him up and open him. Now, he is fought for by ungentle dames whose oyster-knives strike their rivals with terror, while epicures denominate the oyster the key to the paradise called appetite. But who first ate an oyster? The individual's name is not recorded, but tradition says that he did it not through hunger, but in consequence of accident. Being of an inquiring turn of mind, he poked his finger into a half-open oyster, which resented the intrusion with a nip. When *your* finger is hurt, you put it into your mouth; so did he. "Delicious!" he exclaimed, sucking his finger again. The idea flashed upon him that he had discovered a new delight, and oyster eating became henceforth an institution.

That event, however, must have occurred in a very remote and dim antiquity. Among the débris which precede the epoch of written history, oyster-shells are found. In the "midden heaps" of Northern Europe, they are mingled with other rubbish, and with stone implements, evidently the refuse of very ancient feasts. We have all read of Roman feasts which began, as now in Paris, with oysters brought from considerable distances. Oyster parks or ponds are of Roman origin. Vitellius ate oysters all day long. Seneca the wise could swallow his hundred, while Cicero the eloquent could take in his dozens. Louis the Eleventh annually gave the doctors of the Sorbonne an oyster treat. Napoleon the First ate oysters, when he could get them, on the eve of fighting an important battle. In short, we may hold it a gastronomic axiom that no feast is worthy of a connoisseur, in which oysters, during their season, do not come to the front; and fortunately no oysters are better than the English. On the oyster's anatomy we will not dwell, except to remark that, having no head, it can have no brain;—in spite of which, it has a beard.

From oysters we naturally proceed to pearls. Some few pearls, from their size and beauty, have become historical. A pearl from Panama, in shape like a pear and about the size of a pigeon's egg, presented in 1579 to Philip the Second of Spain, was valued at four thousand pounds. In 1605 a Madrid lady possessed an American pearl valued at thirty-one thousand ducats. Pope Leo the Tenth paid a Venetian jeweller, fourteen thousand pounds for a single pearl. He had never heard of the class of persons who and their money are soon parted. Another pearl was purchased at Califa by the traveller Tavernier, and is said to have been sold by him to the Shah of Persia for the enormous price of one hundred and eighty thousand pounds. If the saying be true, Tavernier was lucky in getting out of Persia with his head on his shoulders. A prince of Muscat possessed a pearl so valuable—not on account of its size, for it weighed only twelve carats, but because it was so clear and transparent that daylight was seen through it—that he refused four thousand pounds for it. Perhaps a better proof of its value would have been that he had taken four thousand pounds for it. The pearl in the crown of Rudolph the Second (it is said) was as large as a pear. Which pear? A jargonell, or a Duchesse d'Augoulême? And how big was the oyster from which it was taken? The Shah of Persia actually possesses a string of pearls, each individual of which is *nearly* the size of a hazel nut—an inestimable

string of jewels. Finally, at the Paris Exhibition of 1855, Queen Victoria displayed some magnificent pearls. On the same occasion, the Emperor of the French exhibited a collection of four hundred and eight pearls, each weighing over nine pennyweights, and all of perfect form and the finest water.

Pearls from mussels are less generally known—produced, however, not by marine, but by fresh-water species. For the best of these, we must go to Scotland. Linnæus, who was acquainted with the origin of pearls in general, was aware of the possibility of producing them artificially from various mollusks. He suggested the collection of a number of mussels, piercing holes in their shells with an augur to produce a wound, and afterwards "parking" them for five or six years to give the pearls time to form. The Swedish Government consented to try the experiment, and long did so secretly. Pearls were produced, but they were of no value, and the enterprise was abandoned as unsuccessful.

Scotch pearls were much celebrated in the middle ages. Between the years 1761 and 1784 pearls to the value of ten thousand pounds were sent to London from the rivers Tay and Isla; "and the trade hitherto carried on in the corresponding years of the present century," says Mr. Bertram, "is more than double that amount. The pearl fisheries of Scotland," he adds, "may become a source of wealth to the people living on the large rivers, if prudently conducted." Mr. Unger, a dealer in gems in Edinburgh, having discerned the capabilities of the Scotch pearl, has established a scale of prices, which he gives according to their size and quality; and it is now a fact that the beautiful pink-hued pearls of our Scottish streams are admired beyond the orient pearl. Empresses, queens, and royal and noble ladies, have made large purchases of these gems; and Mr. Unger estimates the sum paid to pearl-finders in the summer of 1864 at ten thousand pounds. The localities successfully fished have been the Forth, the Tay, the Spey, the Isla, and most of the Highland rivers of note.

Passing from the mussels to the pholades, we have a family who not merely bury themselves in sand, like cockles and razor-fish, but who are able in some mysterious way to excavate for themselves a dwelling in argillaceous rocks and even in harder stone. Our wonder is increased on finding their shell not stouter than paper. One species, indeed, is called Pholas papyracea. Besides this faculty of boring and burrowing, they possess another curious property—phosphorescence. The bodies of many mollusks shine in the dark, but none emit a more brilliant light than the pholades. Those who should eat them in the dark in an uncooked state—and they are well-flavoured and delicate—would seem to be swallowing phosphorus.

Most Italian tourists have beheld the evidence, furnished by pholades, of geological disturbance. On the shore of Pozzuolo, is a ruin called the Temple of Serapis, but probably a thermal establishment for the use of its mineral waters. All that is now left, are three marble columns, each about forty feet high. These three columns, at about ten feet from their base, are riddled with holes, and full of cavities bored deep into the marble. The borings occupy a space of three feet on each column. There is no doubt about the cause of the perforations. In some of the cavities, the shell of the operator is still found, and naturalists seem agreed that it is a species of pholas.

To enable the stone-boring mollusks, which live only in the sea, to excavate this marble, the temple and its columns must have been sunk in sea water. Only under these conditions could the borers have worked upon the marble. But since the traces of perforation are now visible ten feet above the surface, it follows that, after being long immersed in water, the columns have been elevated to their present position. The temple has been raised again, carrying with it, engraved in marble, ineffaceable proofs of its immersion.

After the pholades, come the teredos or ship-worms—marine creatures with an irresistible propensity for perforating submerged wood. The galleries bored by these unsuspected miners, riddle the whole interior of a piece of wood; destroying it entirely, without any external indication of their ravages. By a strange kind of instinct, however multiplied may be their furrows or tubes in the same log of wood, they never mingle—there is never any communication between them. The wood is thus attacked at a thousand different points, until its entire substance is destroyed. Ships thus silently and secretly mined, have suddenly gone down with their crews, solely through the ravages of these relentless enemies.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, half the coast of Holland was threatened with destruction, because the piles which support its dikes and sea-walls were attacked by the teredo. Hundreds of thousands of pounds were expended in order to avert the danger. Fortunately a closer attention to the habits of the mollusk has brought a remedy against a formidable evil. The teredo has an invincible antipathy to rust, and timber impregnated with oxide of iron is safe from its ravages. The creature's aversion being known, all that is necessary, is, to sink the timber to be submerged, in a tank of prepared oxide of iron—to clothe it, in short, in a thick coating of iron rust. Ships' timber may be so protected; but the copper with which ships' bottoms are usually sheathed serves the same purpose even better.

Respecting the cephalopods (cuttle-fish, sepias, and other creatures with eight or ten arms round their heads), it is hard to say whether the facts concerning them, or the fictions, are the stranger. There exists a fearful fragment, a beak nearly two feet in length, which belonged to a great sucker or cuttle-fish. This monster, if the other parts of its body were large in proportion, must have been enormous, with arms

perhaps twenty or thirty feet long, studded with countless adhesive cups. And then, as Michelet says, there is the contradiction of a tyrant of the seas being soft and gelatinous. While making war on mollusks, he remains a mollusk also; that is to say, always an embryo. He presents the strange, almost ridiculous, appearance of a fœtus furious and semi-transparent, soft and insatiably cruel, taking life not for food alone, but for the mere pleasure of destroying.

Unless travellers' tales be "the thing which is not," colossal cuttle-fish still exist, encounters with which would rival Tartar-catching. Twenty years ago, some fishermen, near Nice, took an individual six feet long. Péron saw in the Australian seas, a cuttle-fish nearly eight feet long. M. Rung met, in the middle of the ocean, a short-armed cephalopod of a reddish colour, whose body was as big round as a tun. In 1853, a gigantic cephalopod was stranded on the coast of Jutland. Its body, which was dismembered by the fishermen, furnished many barrow loads.

The French steam corvette, Alecton, when between Teneriffe and Madeira, fell in with a gigantic calamary, not less—according to the account—than fifty feet long, without reckoning its eight arms covered with suckers. At its largest part, it was some twenty feet in circumference; the tail end terminated in two fleshy lobes or fins of great size. The brick-red flesh was soft and glutinous, and its whole weight was estimated at four thousand pounds.

The commandant, wishing to secure this monster, actually engaged it in battle. Numerous shots were aimed at it, but the balls traversed its flaccid mass without causing any vital injury. After one of the volleys, the waves were observed to be covered with foam and blood; and the odour of musk, peculiar to many of the cephalopods, was strongly perceptible.

Musket-shots not producing the desired result, harpoons were employed; but they took no hold on the creature's soft and flabby flesh. Escaping from the harpoon it dived under the ship, and came up again on the other side. At last they succeeded in getting it to bite the harpoon, and in passing a rope round its lower extremity. But when they attempted to hoist it out of the water, the rope, penetrating deep into the flesh, cut it in two. The head with the arms and tentacles dropped into the sea and made off, while the fins and posterior parts were brought on board. These weighed about forty pounds.

The crew in their eagerness would have launched a boat in pursuit; the commander refused, fearing the animal might capsize it. It was hardly worth risking the lives of his men for the chance of catching a cuttle-fish, however phenomenal. It is probable that this colossus was sick or exhausted by a struggle with some other monster of the deep. Otherwise it would have been more active in its movements, besides darkening the waters with the inky liquid which all the cephalopods have at command. Judging from its size, it would carry at least a barrel of this black liquid, if it had not been expended in some recent fray.

One of the most striking episodes in Victor Hugo's Travailleurs de la Mer, is the fisherman's battle with the pieuvre. The Natural History and Fishery of the Sperm Whale contains a like incident, but true.

Mr. Beale, while searching for shells at Bonin Island, was astonished to see an extraordinary looking animal crawling back towards the surf. Its eight legs, from their soft and flexible nature, bent considerably under the weight of its body, so that it was only just lifted above the rocks. It appeared much alarmed, and made every attempt to escape. Mr. Beale endeavoured to stop it by putting his foot on one of its tentacles, but it got away several times in spite of his efforts. He then laid hold of one of the tentacles with his hand and held it firmly; the limb appeared as if it would be torn asunder in the struggle. To settle the contest, he gave it a violent jerk. It resisted the pull; but the moment after, in a rage, it lifted a head with large projecting eyes, and loosing its hold of the rocks sprang upon Mr. Beale's naked arm, clinging to it with its suckers, while it endeavoured to get the beak (which he could now see), between the tentacles, in a position to bite him. Mr. Beale described its cold slimy grasp as extremely sickening. He called loudly to the captain, who was also searching for shells, to come to his assistance. He was released by killing the tormentor with a boat-knife, the arms being disengaged bit by bit. This cephalopod, of the species called rock-squid by whalers, must have measured about four feet across its expanded arms, while its body was not bigger than a large hand clenched.

The cuttle-fish can easily reply to Don Diego's question, "Roderick, hast thou a heart?" It has more than *a* heart, being furnished with three; the first two, placed at the end of the branchiæ; the third, on the medial line of the body. In another peculiarity the cuttle-fish surpasses man. Under the influence of strong emotion, the human face turns pale, or blushes; in some individuals it even becomes blue. The cuttle-fish does this, and more. Yielding to the impressions of the moment, it suddenly changes colour, passing through a variety of tints, and only resuming its familiar hue when the cause of the changes has disappeared. It is, in fact, gifted with great sensibility, which reacts immediately on its elastic tissues in a most extraordinary and unlooked-for way. Under the influence of passion man is born to blush; but under no sort of excitement does he cover himself with pustules. The cuttle-fish not only changes colour, but throws out an eruption of little warts. "Observe," says D'Orbigny, "a poulpe in a pool of water. As it walks round its retreat, it is smooth and very pale. Attempt to seize it, it quickly assumes a deeper tint, and its body

becomes covered on the instant with warts and hairs, which remain there until its confidence is entirely restored."

The Ocean World (which contains prettier portraits than those of calmars and cuttle-fish) has afforded us several agreeable and instructive hours. It is a book compiled to a large extent from La Terre et les Mers of M. Figuier, but the larger portion is a free translation of that author's latest work, La Vie et les Mœurs des Animaux. The seaside season is fast approaching, and we cordially welcome a new seaside book. Its value will be increased, in a second edition, by the correction of several obvious errata and mistranslations. The work (which is richly illustrated by four hundred and twenty-seven excellent engravings), together with a few others treating of similar subjects, will enable the holiday-maker to pass a rainy day at the seaside not only pleasantly but profitably.

GOODMAN MISERY.

PETER and Paul met in a village on a certain day, when the rain was falling in torrents. They were wet to the skin. They were both in quest of a lodging for the night, but could find none. A rich man—one Richard—had turned them from his gates, bidding them remember that his house was not a public wine-shop, when a poor woman, who was washing linen in a brook, took pity on them and led them to her neighbour, the Goodman Misery. How much more considerate was the poor washerwoman than Richard with his closed gates; for, having bethought herself on the way that old Misery would probably have naught wherewith to break the fast and slake the thirst of his guests, she provided herself with some cooked fish, a big loaf, and a pitcher of Susa wine. Peter and Paul ate with a will. The hungry man tastes the sweetest viands. But sad was the case when the meal was at an end. Goodman Misery was so poor he had no bed to offer them, save the straw upon which he usually rested his own aching limbs. The two travellers were, however, too considerate to accept it. They elected to sit up, and, by way of passing the time, suggested that Misery should tell his story to them. The Goodman consented, for it was a short and not a very eventful one. The most he had to tell, was, that a thief had stripped his pear-tree, the fruit of which was nearly all he had to depend upon for his wretched living. He would have gladly shared the fruit with them, had he not suffered this cruel robbery.

Touched by his distress, Peter and Paul told Goodman Misery that they would pray to Heaven for him. And one of them considerately added, if he, Goodman Misery, had any particular desire would he mention it?

The Goodman desired no more from the Lord than that any man who might climb his pear-tree should be fixed in it, and immovable, until he, Goodman Misery, willed that he should descend from it.

On the very day which saw the retreating figures of Peter and Paul, while Misery was gone to fetch a pitcher of water, the same thief who had stolen his finest pears returned to the tree. Goodman Misery, having set down his pitcher, perceived the rascal immovable amid the branches.

"Rascal, I have got you, have I?" Misery shouted; and then, aside and in a low voice to himself: "Heaven! Who, then, were my guests last night? This time you will need to be in no hurry to pick my pears; but let me tell you that you will pay a heavy price for them in the torments you will have to endure at my hands. To begin with, all the town shall see you in your present plight. Then I will light a roaring fire under my tree, and smoke and dry you like a Mayence ham."

Goodman Misery having departed in quest of firewood to smoke and dry the thief like a Mayence ham, the culprit cried lustily until he attracted two of the Goodman's neighbours. Yielding to the prayers of the thief, these two honest folk climbed the tree to rescue their fellow-creature, whereupon they discovered that they too were fixed to the branches. The three had been left in company just seventeen hours and a half when Goodman Misery returned with a bag of bread and a goodly faggot upon his head. He was terrified to find three men settled in his pear-tree.

"Come, come," he cried; "the fair will be a good one with so many customers. And pray what did you two new-comers want here? Couldn't you ask me for a few pears, and not come in my absence to steal them?"

"We are no thieves," they replied. "We are charitable neighbours, who came to help a man whose lamentations smote us to the heart. When we want pears, we buy them in the market; there are plenty without yours."

"If what you say be true," said Misery, "you want nothing in my tree, and may come down as soon as you please; the punishment is for thieves only." Whereupon the two neighbours found themselves free, and quickly regained the ground; but the thief continued fixed to the branches in a pitiable condition after his long imprisonment; and the neighbours stood astonished at the power of the Goodman. They begged hard that Misery would take pity even on the thief, who had endured torture for many hours. The rascal prayed hard also, crying, "I'll pay any sum, but, *in the name of God*, let me come down. I am enduring tortures!"

At this word Misery permitted himself to be mollified. He told the thief, in releasing him, that he would forget his crime and forgive it. To show that he had a generous heart, and that self had never dictated any of the actions of his life, he would make him a present of the fruit he had stolen. He would be released from bondage in the tree, on the condition that he would take an oath never to climb it again,

and that he would never come within one hundred feet of it while the pears were ripe.

"May a hundred devils seize me," said the thief, "if I ever come within a league of it again while I live!"

"That is enough," said the Goodman. "Come down, neighbour; you are free, but never return, if you please."

The thief was so stiff and swollen in his limbs, that poor old Misery had to help him down with a ladder; for nothing would persuade the neighbours to approach the tree a second time. The adventure made a great noise in the neighbourhood, and thenceforth Misery's pears were respected scrupulously.

But Goodman Misery was old, and his strength was waning daily. He was content with the fruit of his pear-tree, but it was meagre fare that contented him. One day a knock was made at his door. He threw the door open and beheld a visitor whom he had long expected, but whom he did not imagine to be quite so near his poor hearth. It was Death, who, on his rounds, had stepped aside to tell him that his hour was near.

"Be welcome," said the Goodman, without flinching a muscle, and looking steadfastly at him as one who did not fear him. Misery had naught on his conscience, though he had lived with very little on his back. Death was surprised to find himself so well received.

"What!" cried Death. "Thou hast no fear of me! No fear of Death! at whose look the strongest tremble, from the shepherd to the king?"

"No, I have no dread of your presence," Misery said. "What pleasure have I in this life? If anything in this world could give me a regret, it would be that of parting from my pear-tree, which has fed me through so many years. But you must be settled with, and you brook no delays nor subterfuges when you beckon. All I will ask and beg you to grant me before I die, is, that I may eat one more of my pears in your presence. Afterwards I shall be ready."

"Thy wish is too modest a wish to be refused," said Death.

Misery crept froth into his yard, Death following closely on his heels. The Goodman shuffled many times round his beloved tree, seeking the finest pear. At length having selected a magnificent one, "There," he said, "I choose that one: I pray you lend me your scythe to cut it down."

"This instrument is never lent," quoth Death. "No good soldier permits himself to be disarmed. But it seems to me it would be better to pluck your pear with the hand. It would be bruised by a fall. Climb into the tree."

"A good idea," said Misery. "If I had the strength, I would climb; but don't you see I can hardly stand?"

"Well," Death answered, "I will afford this service. I will climb the tree myself."

Death climbed the pear-tree, and plucked the fruit which Misery coveted so ardently; but was astonished when he found it impossible to regain the ground.

"Goodman Misery," said Death, "tell me what kind of a tree is this?"

"Cannot you see that it is a pear-tree?"

"Yes, yes; but how is it that I can move neither hand nor foot upon it?"

"I' faith that's your business," Goodman Misery answered.

"What, Goodman! You dare to play a trick upon me, at whose nod all the world trembles? Do you know the risks you are running?"

"I am very sorry," was Misery's cool answer. "But what have you risked yourself in coming to disturb the peace of an unfortunate who never did you harm in his life. What fantastic notion led you to me? You have the time to reflect, however; and since I have you now under my thumb, I will do a little good to the poor world, that you have held in bondage for so many centuries. No! Without the help of a miracle, you will not get out of that tree, until I please to permit you."

Death, who had never found himself in such a plight, saw that he had to deal with some supernatural power.

"Goodman Misery," he pleaded, "I deserve this for having been too amiable towards you. But, don't abuse the power which the All Powerful has given you, for an instant, over me. Make no further opposition, I pray you, to the decrees of Heaven. Consent that I shall descend the tree at once, or I will blast it unto death."

"Blast it," Misery answered, "and I protest to you, by all that is most sacred in the world, dead as my tree may be, it will hold you until you get free from it by God's will."

"I perceive," Death went on, "that I entered an unfortunate house for myself today. But come, come, Goodman Misery. I have business in the four quarters of the world, and it must be all ended before sundown. Do you wish to arrest the course of nature? If I were to make my way out of this predicament, you might feel it sharply."

"Nay," said Misery, "I fear nothing. Every man who is above the fear of Death is beyond any threats. Your menaces have no effect on me. I am always ready to start for the next world when the Lord shall summon me."

"Very fine sentiments, Goodman Misery! Thou mayest boast, Goodman, of being the first in this life who has gotten the better of Death. Heaven commands me that with thy consent I leave thee, to return to thee only on the last day of judgment, when I shall have completed my great work, and man shall be no more. You shall see the end, I promise you; so now, without hesitation, allow me to come down, or let me fly away. A queen is waiting for me, five hundred leagues away."

"Ought I to believe you? Or is it only to betray me that you speak thus to me?"

"No, never shalt thou see me again until all nature is desolation. The last stroke of my

scythe shall fall upon thee. The edicts of Death are irrevocable. Dost thou hear me, Goodman?"

"Yea, I hear; and I believe in thy words. Come down when it shall please thee."

At this Death swept through the air, and disappeared from the sight of Misery. The Goodman has never heard of Death since, although he has often been told of his presence in his neighbourhood, almost next door; so that Misery has lived to a wonderful age, and still dwells in rags near his pear-tree. And, according to the solemn promise of Death, Misery lives till the world shall be no more.

Upon hawkers' shoulders for centuries past has this legend of the words of Scripture, that poverty shall never cease from out the land, been borne through the villages of France. A learned Frenchman surmises that the Goodman was a French child stolen away into Italy, there re-dressed, and thence escaped home into France. Goodman Misery, in any case, has had his chief travels in France. Millions of copies, describing his interviews with Peter and Paul, the thief, and Death, have been sold by hawkers among the road-side cabins of France.

YESTERDAY.

What makes the king unhappy?
His queen is young and fair,
His children climb around him,
With waving yellow hair.

His realm is broad and peaceful,
He fears no foreign foe;
And health to his veins comes leaping
In all the winds that blow.

What makes the king unhappy?
Alas! a little thing,
That money cannot purchase,
Or fleets and armies bring.

And yesterday he had it,
With yesterday it went,
And yesterday it perished,
With all the king's content.

For this he sits lamenting,
And sighs, "alack! alack!
I'd give one half my kingdom,
Could yesterday come back!"

BOOKMAKING.

Any person visiting the race-course at Newmarket, Epsom, Ascot, Liverpool, Chantilly, or any similar place in England or France, must of late years have observed a number of regular attendants upon these events, who are seen throughout the racing season, first at one town and then at another, wherever anything in the shape of steeplechase or flat race is to come off. There is an uniformity in the appearance of these individuals which distinguishes them from all other classes. Their hats are almost invariably new, and evidently bought at fashionable shops. They are, with scarcely an exception, clean shaved, or at most only wear a thin mutton-chop whisker. Their garments are nearly new, and, with the exception of a somewhat profuse quantity of watch-chain knick-knacks, they wear no more jewellery than well-dressed men should. When they meet on the platform at a railway, they always surname each other in the most cordial manner. "How are you, Jones?" "Fine day, Robinson," "Glad to see you, Brown." It is clear at a glance that these persons, though they appear to have abundant leisure, have their minds preoccupied by business. These persons are "bookmakers." Their trade is to attend every race of importance run in this country, in France, and even some few in Germany, and to make money by betting — by "bookmaking" — not upon the way in which one horse beats the speed or the stamina of another horse, but by careful calculations, and making the result of betting upon one event cover that of another: to turn their money, and make an uncommon good thing out of what to the world outside the betting world, is almost invariably a snare and a loss.

There was a time when betting upon racing was confined to those who really took an interest in, or, had some knowledge of, horses. But times have changed. The peer bets his hundreds, the stock-broker his tens, the costermonger his half-crowns. They cannot all bet one with another, for they have other occupations, and their time would be inconveniently consumed in seeking for persons to take or lay them the odds, and who would be good for payment should they lose. The consequence has been that the demand for betting agents has created the supply, and, excepting a few turf magnates who know each other well, everybody who in these days wishes to bet, looks out for a "bookmaker."

As in every other profession, there are good and bad men among the bookmakers; there are honest men who make a living by honest means and fair dealing, and there are men who will take all money paid them, but who make themselves conspicuous by their absence when called upon to pay what they have lost. To the honour of the new calling, the former class predominate greatly, and if any person wishing to bet finds himself in the hands of a "welcher" — the name given to scamps who take everything and pay nothing—it must be his own fault.

The respectable bookmaker is generally — almost invariably—a self-made man. One of them, a man who could write a cheque (and, what is more, have it cashed) for fifty thousand pounds, was once a waiter in a well-known West-end hotel famous some ten or a dozen years ago as the resort of military men given to betting, and for the sanded floor of its coffee-room. Another, whose word is good any day among turf men for twenty-five or thirty thousand pounds, was, about half a dozen years back, butler and valet to a well-known sporting nobleman. A third, once kept a small grocer's shop in a country town in the

north of England. A fourth was a journeyman printer. A fifth used to drive a hansom cab. All these men began with small beginnings, and rose upon their capacity for, and knowledge of, figures. The writer is no advocate of betting. If any one asked his advice how to lay out his money on a horse-race, he would recommend his client to leave the thing alone. In fact, the very winnings of the new calling are of themselves proofs enough that, as a rule, the public must lose its money, and the bookmakers must win.

But how is it that this new calling makes its money—what is the mode of procedure?

Let us suppose that Jones, solicitor, Lincoln's Inn, wishes to back Formosa for the Derby. Jones has an idea that he knows a thing or two—which he does not—about a horse, and, looking in his newspaper, finds that the odds against the above mare are, let us say, ten to one. All he does, is to send his money to some respectable well-known bookmaker, and the latter returns him a ticket, whereby he promises to pay Jones the given odds, plus the money paid to him, the bookmaker, in the event of Formosa winning. Let us say that Jones makes up his mind to risk "a fiver" on the mare's winning; he sends Thompson, the bookmaker, a five-pound note, and gets in return a ticket, by which, in the event of Formosa winning the Derby, Thompson pledges himself to pay Jones fifty-five pounds; that is, fifty pounds as the odds against the mare (ten to one), and the five pounds paid back again. If Jones should be fortunate, and Formosa should win, the money is safe to be paid the day after the race. Thompson is a respectable bookmaker, and his ticket is as good as gold. If, on the other hand, the mare lose, then Jones sees no more of his five pounds, which become the bookmaker's lawful winnings.

The uninitiated will ask how it is that the new calling can be a profitable calling, if, as a rule—and, by the way, it *is* the rule—the bookmakers lay the odds against the horses. Thus, in the example just given, the bookmaker has a chance of winning five pounds, but he has also a chance of losing fifty; and as the odds are often a hundred, a hundred and fifty, even two hundred, to one against a horse, the bookmaker must risk that amount for the chance of winning a single sovereign. A few minutes' consideration will demonstrate how, in the long run—nay, even on almost every event—the bookmaker, who makes betting his trade, must win, and the outside public—though a few here and there may win—must lose.

Let us suppose that for a certain race there are twenty horses to run. Of these, we will suppose that the favourite, or the horse believed most likely to win, stands in the betting at five to one—that is, five to one is bet that such horse does not win the race. Let us further suppose that the second horse is quoted at ten to one against him, the third at fifteen or twenty to one, and so on down to what are called the "outsiders"—the horses supposed to have very little chance of winning—some of which are quoted at sixty, seventy, or even eighty and a hundred, to one, against them. It is very certain that of all these horses only one can win, and if the bookmaker confined himself to laying single bets against all the twenty, he would make but a small profit if one of the favourites won, and would be a heavy loser if any other horse came in first; in other words, if he took the odds of one pound each in favour of the twenty horses, and any horse against which he had bet more than twenty to one lost the race, he would be a loser. On the one hand he would have received twenty pounds, but on the other he would have to pay the odds he had laid against the horse that had won. If, however, the favourite, against which he had only bet five to one was the winner, he would have received twenty pounds, and would only have to pay away six—namely, the five he had bet, plus the one he had been paid by the backer of the horse. If, again, the horse against which he had bet ten to one were the winner, he would, out of the twenty pounds he had received, have to pay away eleven—the ten pounds odds and the one pound received from the backer—and thus he would be a winner of nine pounds, and so on throughout the list of horses.

To a certain extent this theory is true. So much so, that when a favourite horse for a race wins, the event is called "a good thing for the bookmakers;" and when a horse low down in the betting wins, the race is said to be good for the "backers"—that is, for the outside public. But, the bookmaker makes betting his profession, and the very term of "making a book" means to have such a combination of bets in his book that he not only *cannot lose*, but, that no matter what horse comes in first, he *must win*. Thus, on all the great races he commences betting a year, or perhaps eighteen months before the event. Whenever he sees that he is in danger of losing a heavy sum in the event of any particular horse winning, he either stops betting altogether, and says he "is full" on that horse, or more generally takes the bets offered him by the general public, and "hedges" them at some other place of betting resource, with his brother bookmakers, or with other betting men.

What is meant by the term "to hedge" a bet? Let us suppose that Thompson, the bookmaker, finds that if Blue Gown wins the Derby, he will be the loser of a thousand pounds; that is, so many of the public have taken the odds of five to one against the horse, that even calculating what he will pocket by other horses losing, he will still be a loser to the above amount should the favourite win. Still the public go on backing the horse, and thereby increasing his risk. If he were to shut up his book, and refuse to bet against the horse any more, he would lose many clients, for members of the new calling are supposed to be always ready to take the odds to any amount from the backers of horses. So Thompson goes to

some brother bookmaker, or to some "turf swell," and *backs* the horse to the amount of a thousand pounds; thus so arranging his book, that what he will lose to the public if the horse win, he will win from others if the horse loses. This is called "hedging," or squaring the account in the bookmaker's betting-book. The transaction is perfectly lawful. The public want to bet in favour of the horse, but there are other betting-men whose book it will suit to bet against it. The bookmaker accommodates both parties, and transacts his own business in the way most profitable to himself.

Like all other men, the members of the new calling are liable to make mistakes. It not unfrequently happens that they "stand to win" too heavily upon one or two horses, so that, to use their own expression, "the pot boils over." At last year's Derby, many of the bookmakers were sold when Hermit won. This season the dead heat run at Newmarket by Formosa and Moslem was most unexpected. Formosa was the favourite, and the new calling looked upon the race as won before it was run. Just before the horses started the betting was seven to two against Formosa, and a hundred to eight, or twelve-and-a-half to one against Moslem; and yet the two ran a dead heat, consequently the stakes and bets had to be divided.

There are two rules which no respectable bookmaker ever breaks. The first is, never to risk a single shilling over and above what he can pay down in hard cash twenty-four hours after the race; the second is, never to stand too much upon any one horse without hedging his money.

It will hardly be believed what perfect confidence betting-men among the general public —and in these days, particularly among what may be termed the lower middle classes, to bet is the rule, and not to bet the exception —will repose in bookmakers whom they know. It is an every-day occurrence for a small tradesman to put "a fiver" or a "tenner" into the hands of a bookmaker on the eve of a great race, and to beg the bookmaker to lay it out for him to the best advantage; not even telling him what horses to back. The bookmaker generally returns the money with a fair profit next day; deducting his own commission of a shilling in the pound.

The "welcher" bears towards the respectable bookmaker much the same relative position that the keepers of silver hells in former days used to hold towards those who ruled at Crockford's and the great gaming houses. The "welcher," properly so called, takes the money offered him to back a horse; but when he has taken money enough from his dupes, departs from the scene of his labours, and trusts to his luck, a dyed wig, or a pair of false whiskers, not to be recognised. His plan of operations generally is to begin as a betting agent, or bookmaker as he calls himself, in the West-end of London. There he gets round him a knot of clients, whom he meets in some public-house, the master of which encourages him; for his presence attracts several other persons to meet him on business, and business is thirsty work. When established in this way, he generally makes gentlemen's servants and small tradesmen his victims. For a time, perhaps, he works "on the square," not being trusted with enough to make it worth his while to be dishonest. He begins with taking shilling and halfcrown bets, rarely going as high as a sovereign on any horse. His chief game is to get his clients to bet on what are called double events, which, though tempting in the odds they offer, are almost a certainty in favour of those who bet against them, which bookmakers, whether honest men or "welchers," invariably do.

A "double event" bet is to back two named horses to win two named races. As the odds against this are necessarily high, the temptation to the outside public is proportionably great. The way to calculate a double event bet is to multiply the odds against the one horse by the odds against the other. Thus, let us suppose that the betting against Blue Gown winning the Derby is ten to one, and the odds against Lady Elizabeth winning the Oaks are twelve to one. Ten times twelve make a hundred and twenty; therefore the odds against the two horses winning the double event are a hundred and twenty to one. Let us suppose that the first event comes off right, and that Blue Gown does win the Derby; it follows as a matter of course that the whole bet then depends upon Lady Elizabeth's winning the Oaks; and thus the total amount of the odds, a hundred and twenty to one, is laid against her. If the bookmaker believed there was any chance whatever of the second event turning against him, he would either hedge his money—which, of course, he has every possible facility of doing—or he would buy the bet from the backer for a comparatively small sum.

From the West-end of London a "welcher" bookmaker generally goes to the far east; and, among the low public-houses of Whitechapel or the Commercial-road, manages to prove to the off-scourings of the Jewish population that there are even keener wits in matters financial than themselves. Another dodge of these rascals is to adopt the names of some well-known and respectable bookmaker, and, by inserting advertisements in the sporting papers, induce backers of the pigeon kind to send their golden eggs to the nests of the hawks. Of course this little game does not last long.

There was a time when "welchers" and such like unmitigated rascals were only to be found in London; but now, thanks to railways and cheap trains, they are to be found in almost every large town in England. Manchester is full of welchers; Liverpool numbers its welchers by the hundred; similarly, there are any number of these ruffians in Leeds, or Birmingham, or Bristol. Nay, in even much smaller towns, such as Cheltenham, Leamington, and Bath. The nature of their frauds, and the intense rascality of their calling, oblige them to be rolling stones. When the metropolis is too

hot for them, they betake themselves to Liverpool, or Leeds; and when those become too hot, they emigrate to Manchester or Birmingham. If prosperous, a welcher will perhaps take a low public-house, which becomes the resort of similar scoundrels; if he do not get on, after two or three years of provincial life, he returns to London, and ends in a police office and a jail.

Among the outside public there is an idea that the whole betting world regulates its financial operations very much by relying on information obtained from training stables, through persons who betray the trust reposed in them, and who divulge secrets respecting this horse beating his stable companion at a trial; that filly breaking down at exercise, or the other colt going wrong in his fetlock. This means of gaining information, however, is altogether a thing of the past. Ask any bookmaker what rule he observes in his betting throughout the year, and he will reply that he "follows the money." He means that the market price of each horse guides him in all his speculations, and that of the quality or qualification of the horses he knows little or nothing. The said "money," or "market price"—the betting odds, in fact—are much more influenced by the owners of the horses wanting to push up or pull down their horses in the betting, than by any capabilities, or want of the same, in the horses themselves. Of course, when the owner of a really good horse thinks that the animal has a good chance to win a certain race, he backs him; but rarely without making his money safe by hedging upon some other horse in the same race. And in the same way, when a horse is considered quite unfit to run, he is generally "scratched" out of the race, or allowed to start merely to make the running for some other horse. It is only when the competing horses are actually at the post, just before starting, that their condition causes any change worth speaking of in the odds; and even then the cautious betters prefer bookmaking upon figures to betting upon the horses. Racing as now conducted is a pure matter of money making, and races might just as well be run by costermongers' donkeys as by the best blood in England, so far as it is conducive to any improvement in the breed of horses, apart from racing purposes.

AN UNOFFICIAL REPORT.

In a recent number of All the Year Round, the published opinions of certain practical men reporting their impressions of what they saw at Paris, when visiting that city on the occasion of the Great Exhibition, were made the subject of an article. That article, and those reports reviewed in it, reminded me of some professional strictures made by a representative of a very different industry from any of those reported on to the Society of Arts.

One day last season, when the Paris Exhibition was in the fulness of its popularity, and when excursions for the benefit of all conditions of men were thriving, I crossed from Boulogne to Dover aboard a steamboat crammed from end to end with passengers.

Among that large assembly, was an individual personage who particularly attracted my attention, and whom I continually found myself staring at, with a persistency hardly consistent with the rules of good-breeding, as laid down by the best authorities on general etiquette. I think it must have been a certain incongruousness in the look of this personage which made me stare at him so much. The man and his costume, or "get up," as the slang of the day goes, were so entirely inconsistent and at variance with each other. They told two different tales in unmistakable, though inarticulate, language. Let me try to translate their silent evidence into words.

To begin with, then, so far as his hair and his headdress went, this small personage—for he was short of stature and light in build—was, to all appearance, a Frenchman; his hair being cut exceedingly short, and the cap he wore upon his head being of that peculiar kind which is known in France as a helmet-cap: a headdress now almost confined to omnibus conductors, but which used formerly to be much worn by the guards of diligences and others. He wore, moreover, a short boy's jacket with an upright collar, like a soldier's. This garment was, however, worn open, and was of a dark brown, or invisible green tint, it was difficult to see which. With this jacket the sum of those indications which seemed to point to French origin came to an end. The gentleman's legs, which were somewhat bowed, were unmistakably English; and as to his face, though he was closely shaved, except as to his upper lip (on which there was about a week's growth of hair), it was the most indubitably English face you could desire to see—English in feature, in expression, in colour. As to his social standing, it was evident that he belonged to what is mysteriously called the "working class," and had it been necessary to define his position with nicer accuracy, I think I should have been disposed to attribute to him a connexion with that branch of industry which is carried on in stables and straw yards. Such a guess would not have been very far from the mark, as it afterwards turned out.

It surprised me to see the person whom I have thus attempted to sketch travelling by a boat which was not an excursion boat, and apparently alone. For, he belonged to a class of travellers, who travel for the most part in large numbers, and by excursion trains. Here was another thing to stimulate my curiosity. I ought to mention, by the way, that the question of his nationality had been set at rest by a few words which he had spoken in unmistakable, if not "very choice," English. I was not long in carrying out my determination to get into conversation with this personage. We were standing close together in the forward part of the ship, whither I had gone to smoke, and I

began by asking him abruptly, "if he had been to Paris?"

Heavens, what a burst of eloquence did that singularly common-place question of mine call forth! This little man was a sort of conversation cask waiting to be tapped, and I had tapped him.

"Yes, he had been to Paris. He had had a thirty-shilling excursion ticket, and was coming back with it, and unluckily at Amiens he had run out to look about him a little, thinking there was more time than there was, but the train had gone without him, and he had been compelled to take another ticket and come on, as his holiday time was up, and he was obliged to be back in London. He didn't blame anybody. It was his own mistake, not the Frenchmen's," he said; "catch *them* making a mistake!"

It was such an extraordinary thing to find an Englishman of the class to which my new acquaintance belonged, ready to acknowledge merit in Frenchmen and French institutions, that I now wished more than ever to draw my gentleman out, and to hear what he had to say.

"Catch *them* making a mistake," repeated the little man. "I've been among 'em, now, for handy upon a fortnight, excursioning here, there, and everywhere, travelling in their railway trains, riding in their 'busses, dining in their eating-houses, visiting their Louvers, their Goblin Tapestries, their Pally Royals, and what not, and I never saw 'em make a mistake yet. The managing ways of that people, the extent to which they take you in hand—if I may so put it—looking after you from the moment you come—in a manner of speaking—into their custody, till the moment you come out of it again—is something altogether surprising and beautiful. Not that this manner of doing it all for you, and tackling you at every turn, and 'you must go in here,' and 'you mustn't go in there,' and 'you must do this,' and 'you mustn't do that,' is always what you like; but still what I do maintain, is, that if you do what they tell you to do, and don't what they tell you to don't, they see that you get what you go in for, and that you come out right side uppermost at last."

"Then altogether," I said, "you admire their institutions?"

"'Admire 'em!' I should think I did! Why, look at 'em in the matter of 'busses alone. There's a good many things in Paris that I don't understand, and don't profess to understand; but I *do* know something about the working of a 'buss, and anything like the way they manage their 'busses—but there! It's perfection. That's what it is."

"You are engaged in the omnibus business yourself?"

"Yes, sir. I'm a conductor on the Islington and Brompton line. That's what *I* am. Angel, Oxford-street, Circus, Piccadilly, Sloane-street, Bilers, and Queen's Elm. I'm very close occupied in a general way, but I managed to get a holiday for a fortnight, and, having a pound or two by me (it was left me in a small legacy, that money was) I thought I'd spend it in taking one of these excursion tickets to Paris and back. The fact is," continued my friend in the helmet-cap, confidentially, "I'd been put upon my metal, a bit. There's a young woman living near the 'Helm,' as nice a young woman as you'd wish to see, and Clarissar Armstrong by name, and it's her conduct that's put my back up, as you may say, and been the cause of my jining this excursion party. 'You've no conversation, George,' she says to me one day. 'There's some people,' she says, 'has a lot to say for themselves, and telling you where they've been, and what they've seen, and all the rest of it. But you don't seem to have nothing to say about anythink.' I knew what *she* meant, she was a thinking of young Rackstraw, the greengrocer, that's who she was thinking of. He'd been to Margate for a week, and you'd think he'd been to Jerusalem to hear what he had to say about it, going on as if it was the wonderfullest journey ever made by man. 'I'll soon cut him out,' I thinks to myself. So the next time I saw Clarissar Armstrong, I remarks, in a easy way, 'I'm agoing to Paris to-morrow, and perhaps I may have some conversation when I come back.' But I don't know that I shall have much to say that she'll care to hear, after all. I haven't noticed much about the ladies' dresses, or the short petticuts, or the bonnets and cloaks in the shop windows, or the likes of them, my whole mind having been bestowed, as was but natural, upon my own subject, namely, the 'busses. And the way them busses was officered, that is to say driven and conducted, and worked generally. There! Per-FECTION!

"I should say that one of those 'busses as holds twenty-four inside, and is drawn by three white horses screeching and yelling at the tops of their voices all the way along the road, would make a sensation in Brompton if anything would. Accommodation for twelve up each of the seats inside, and divided into compartments, too, like armchairs, so that you can't get squeezed; and if anybody gets in who's several sizes too large for his seat, it's *him* as must take the consequences of it and not *you*. But it isn't so much the size of them 'busses as would astonish our natives—there being some good big 'uns among the Islington Favourites, and also working from the Oxford-street Circus to the station of the Metropolitan at Portland-road. It isn't so much the size, nor yet the compartments, nor yet the dial-plate again the door, on which they give a stroke for every passenger as enters the 'buss, and which, as tending to show suspicion on the part of the 'buss company of their servants, I cannot approve of—it isn't so much these things, nor yet the way in which the passengers get in and out when the 'buss is at full trot without stopping the vehicle—throwing themselves back'ards when they get out, and for'ards when they get in—it isn't any of these things that would astonish our general 'buss

public so much as the extraordinary way in which order is kept and fair play observed when there's a crowd of people—about five times as many as the 'buss will hold—all congregated together at the place from which it starts, and all wanting to get in at once.

"You'd think there'd be no end to the fighting and scrambling under such circumstances, the strongest battling their way in and the weakest going to the wall. Not a bit of it. There's a little wooden office at the starting place where they give you a number on a piece of card—No. 20, 21, 22, or any other number as the case may be; the earlier you apply the earlier number you get, and the sooner consequently you're sent off. Now, say you get number twenty-one; away you goes with it and presents yourself among the crowd about the door of the 'buss. No chance for you yet. You find that the twentys are not placed yet, perhaps not the nineteens even, nor all the eighteens. You must wait till these are seated. If you were with the strength of a giant to force your way in you'd just be pulled out again before you could seat yourself in the conveyance. You must wait.

"By-and-by the eighteens and the nineteens are disposed of. 'Any more nineteens?' shouts the conductor—'any more nineteens?' There are no more. 'Twentys then,' he sings out, and immediately all the people with twenty tickets get in till the vehicle is full. It drives off, and in due time another takes its place. The conductor asks at the little office what number was on when the last 'buss left, and then takes his place at the door of his own 'buss. 'No. 20' he calls, and in get all the twentys who remained from the last load, one arter another. 'Any more twentys?' asks the conductor, and then at last your chance with your twenty-one ticket comes, and you get your place.

"But the systematic ways of the managers, whoever they were, that had the working of those Exhibition omnibusses, didn't end with the starting arrangements. They'd discovered that by working the 'busses on a tramway, instead of along the common paved road, a great saving might be brought about, both in time, in horses' labour, in wear and tear of rolling stock, and in a many other ways; so down went a double set of rails along the whole line of their journey, from the Exhibition as far as the most central point in Paris to which it was possible to bring a tramway without interfering with the ordinary carriage traffic. And here, then, springs up a new difficulty. You require for working any kind of vehicle on a tramway, a different kind of wheel to what is required on an ordinary pavement. You want a wheel with a flange; but then comes the obstacle that the wheel with the flange can't be used *except* on a rail. This was the fix in which the managers found themselves when they began to arrange their plans. What was to be done? Have another 'buss ready with the usual street wheels, and transfer the passengers into it for the rest of the journey? That would have been one way certainly, but an awkward and clumsy way, and most particularly obnoxious to the passengers themselves, who hate being turned out of one vehicle into another, in a batch, to an extraordinary degree: as any one may observe at a railway junction when it is necessary for the travellers to change their carriages. No, that way wouldn't do, and some other way had to be hit upon.

"It was in the dusk of the evening when I first travelled by one of these Leviathan 'busses, and I couldn't very well see what was agoing on; but when we come to the beginning of the Paris streets we come to a stop in a large open space, where, as far as I could make out from the window, there was a crowd of workmen with lanterns, who were rolling wheels about—great heaps of which were lying here and there by the way-side—without, as far as I could make out, any particular object. I'd not been occupied long in wondering what was going to happen, when I suddenly felt a great hitch up of the side of the omnibus on which I was a sitting. Then there was a kind of a grinding, or a rewolving sound, if I may so speak, and then we were hitched down again with a slight bump. This was followed by a great cracking of whips and screaming of horses, and we were off again and rattling through the Paris streets. Bless you! In that brief space of time they'd changed the wheels with the flanges on them for ordinary street wheels fit for ordinary street traffic.

"You'll understand," the little man added, "that it was only the wheels on one side as had to be changed; the flanges on one side being sufficient to hold the wheels on that side to the rail, and those on the other side being ordinary wheels, running along a sunk tramway.

"But there, sir! I might go on for ever about them French omnibusses, and their arrangements; their correspondence system for getting from one line of 'busses to another line; their plan of putting up a board outside when the conveyance is full, to tell you so; their taking your money almost as soon as you get in, so that there's no temptation to the passenger to stand on the step while waiting for change, as so many people—especially ladies—do with us, forgetting that if the horses move on so much as a single yard they're certain to be throwed on their faces in the road. But what's the use of my going on about all these things? What I mean to do is to try and imitate, as far as my humble powers go, what I've seen, and to try, moreover, to persuade the governors to go in for some of those improvements which I've been taking the liberty of setting before you, and the sight of which has made me feel so uncommon small when I've thought of all the scrambling, and shoving, and the scowling, and the refusing to close up, and all the rest of the muddle, which I've witnessed, first and last, in the course of all

the many journeys I've made from the Angel to the Queen's Helm."

It was by way of taking a first step towards the organising of a great omnibus reform that he had provided himself with the French omnibus conductor's cap and jacket which had already been described as forming part of his costume.

"He thought it might lead to something," he said.

POLLY'S ONE OFFER.

IN SIX CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

"I'M not wishing to complain, but it *is* a hard life to be left a widow with children, and nothing certain to bring 'em up to. I hope my girls will never marry to be left as I was. Poor James didn't expect it, and I'm sure I looked for something very different, or I should have thought twice before I'd plunged into such troubles. A family comes before you've time to turn round, and nobody would believe the wear and tear of boys but them that have them—not that girls are not a terrible anxiety too. And it isn't so much when they're little—when they're little, after you've put 'em to bed, you know they are safe and out of mischief, and there is peace in the house; it is when they're getting up your real troubles begin. Jack is no sooner off my hands than there's Polly to think of—poor little Polly that was seventeen yesterday, and was only a baby when her father died — there she sits!" and as she concluded, Mrs. Curtis raised her right hand and let it drop heavily into her lap again, and groaned as if Polly were engaged in the commission of some moral enormity past expression in words.

The stout old lady, Mrs. Sanders, to whom the widow was pouring out her injuries at the hands of Providence, groaned responsive, and looked at Polly with a slow shake of the head, which seemed to imply that her case was bad as bad could be. "Thank the Lord, I never had no children," said she, with solemn gratitude; "They'd have killed me outright. Sanders is quite enough by himself! Nobody knows, but them that has 'em to put up with, the cu'rous ways of men. Take warning by your mother and me, Polly, and never you go to marry, to be dragged to death with children, and made a slave of by a husband as won't let you have a sixpence in your pocket, and him that extravagant with his clubs and his committees, and his nonsense, that I should never be surprised if we was in the Gazette next week."

Polly's rosy little dewy face laughed all over, and she cried gaily: "That I won't, Mrs. Sanders; you and my mother are a perfect antidote to the romance of family affection. If ever I feel tempted to fall in love, I'll remember you, and be saved the folly."

"Folly, indeed, and worse than folly!" ejaculated Mrs. Curtis, and stared wearily into the fire.

She deserved to be weary. Mrs. Sanders had come in at three o'clock out of the November fog; it was now five and quite dusk in the little drawing-room, and not one cheerful word had either attempted to say to the other. Polly would have run out of hearing of their monotony long since, but there was no other fire in the house to escape to except Biddy's in the kitchen, which was not "redd up" till tea-time; so she had fallen back on the patience of a contented heart and sweet temper, and her precious faculty of mental abstraction, which she had cultivated to a high degree in her mother's society. And a very wise measure too, for though Mrs. Curtis bemoaned her widowed lot without ceasing, Polly well knew that her griefs were fictitious now, and that she enjoyed nothing so much as a good uninterrupted wail with vulgar old Mrs. Sanders. In fact, all her real cares had been taken off her shoulders by other people as fast as they arose, and on this particular November afternoon, she was so much at a loss for a grievance that she could only recur to the event of seventeen years ago, when a beneficent providence had relieved her of a husband of whom, during his lifetime, she had never spoken save as a "trying" man. Jane, the eldest daughter, and the eldest of the family, had assumed its headship immediately on her father's vacating it, and had by her teaching of music and singing, earned its daily bread since she was as young as Polly was now. Uncle Walter had taken James and Tom from the grammar school successively, after helping to maintain them there until they were of an age to go into training for physic and divinity, the expense of which training he bore with the assistance of Uncle Everard; then Uncle Everard's wife, who had no girls of her own, had adopted Lily, the second daughter, from quite a little thing, and had brought her up with every luxury and indulgence of a rich man's child; and, lastly, Uncle Robert, who was a civil engineer, had just taken Jack into his house and office, with the understanding that he would provide for him entirely if his conduct was satisfactory. The worst of this was, as Jane said, that they could never be one house again; but her mother, who had no sentiment, protested that it did not matter, if they were in the way of promotion in the world: large families must scatter, and all she wanted was to see them get on, and be independent, and not subject to poverty as *she* had been. Jane acquiesced in the necessity for the boys, and only hoped they might keep little Polly at home, for little Polly was her pet, her heart's darling and delight from the day of her birth until now that she was a sweet, blooming, blushing little woman.

But little Polly, for a wonder, had a fancy for getting away from the dull suburban cottage whence the boys were now all gone for good, and had lately proclaimed her own intention to go out as a governess, and not continue a burden on Jane.

"A burden!" echoed Jane: "Why, Polly, you are my only joy."

"But you will not have to work so hard when I can help mother from my salary, and I don't at all dislike the idea of going out as some girls do. I'm not afraid," said Polly, with the brightest brave look on her bonnie face.

"But I dislike the idea for you;" said Jane, and did not drop her opposition even when Mrs. Curtis interposed with the remark that Polly was very sensible, and for anything she should do to hinder it, might have her own way: she had much better go for a governess than stop at home to be picked up and married by somebody who would die and leave her with a dozen children to fend for, and nothing to put in their mouths.

Polly laughed: "Don't be anxious, mammy dear, catch me marrying after listening to you and Mrs. Sanders for all these years! I should as soon think of jumping into the canal!"

"Hush, Polly, don't be silly," said Jane. "What do you know about it? All men don't die like papa, and all women are not such bad wives as Mrs. Sanders—yes, I call her a bad wife—always speaking ill of her husband, who is no worse than other people's."

"Then how disagreeable other people's must be," retorted Polly naughtily.

Jane shook her head at her reprovingly, and the subject dropped for the moment. But it was to this whim of Polly's that Mrs. Curtis was referring when she told her favourite gossip that no sooner was Jack off her hands than there was Polly to think of—as if the anxiety would be hers. She was not an unkind mother, but she had no desire to keep her children at home, and it was her evident willingness to part with Polly, who had never given her a day's pain since she was born, that had most to do with Polly's determination to go. She was a clever little creature, and had been well educated; kisses, caresses, indulgences had never been in her way, and she felt no need of them. The atmosphere of home was too cold for the development of affectionateness. Jane had wisely ordained that she should be trained to be serviceable, but she had not intended that her pet sister should work like herself while she could work for her; and she was thoroughly dismayed when she heard the little thing declare that she meant to use the weapons of independence that had been put into her hands, to keep herself, and help her mother. Jane had never been otherwise than rather plain, and when, at twenty, Dr. Shore proposed to her, her mother and everybody else had said that it was so clearly her duty to stay at home, and assist in bringing up the younger children, that she had abandoned all hope of having a life of her own, and had applied herself to extending and strengthening her musical connexion, which was already yielding her a nice little income. We may suppose that her affections had not been very deeply engaged, though often afterwards, when tired and jaded with a long day's work, she used to think that if the fates had been propitious, she could have been very happy as Dr. Shore's wife: he had married then, and there was no place of repentance left her, and she kept her regrets to herself; but it was one of her chief pleasures of imagination to throne Polly in some good man's love, and bless them with children to whom she was to be a fairy-godmother and special providence: for Polly was very sweet and pretty, a round, rosy, soft, dimpled little creature, whom it was quite a temptation to kind people to fondle and be tender to.

But Polly, too sensible, too practical mite that she was, did not care for their fondling, and made a mock at their tenderness. She prided herself on her strength of mind and her capability, and was quite in earnest to prove them. As for being pretty, and having eyes like golden syrup and a complexion of milk and roses, what did it matter? She had brains, too, and would make quite as good a governess as ugly girls; and she would a great deal rather be Jane with money of her own, and free and independent, than be dragged to death with children like her mother, or have shillings doled out to her one by one for housekeeping, like Mrs. Sanders. As for falling in love, people didn't all fall in love, and she was not going to fall in love? Jane might trust her for that—she was not an idiot, and she should take good care to nip any sentiment of that sort in the bud.

While Polly was still at home her mother had shown her that process of nipping sentiment in the bud, and though Polly spoke of it thus airily when she wanted to reassure Jane, she had manifested some temper at the time of the actual occurrence. It was on this wise. A school-fellow of her brother Tom, who had been at Heidelberg University for a couple of years, came back to Norminster, and called on Mrs. Curtis. Tom had left home then, but Walter Scott nevertheless called again, and after the second visit, when he had seen Polly, and heard her and Jane sing, he sent some German music that he had copied with his own hand, and a nice little note addressed to Polly. Mrs. Curtis pursed up her mouth as Polly's expanded in a pleased and rosy smile, and said: "That music must be returned, Polly."

Polly's countenance was solemnised in a moment, and her clear brown eyes sparkled as she asked, briefly, "Why?"

"Because I say so. I know what I am about and what I mean, Polly."

"Wait till Jane comes in; it is nothing to make a fuss about."

"Do what I bid you, and do it at once. Tie up the music again, and write a civil note to say that you never accept presents."

"This music has not cost him sixpence—only his trouble," said Polly, still reluctant. "Jane will be vexed."

Mrs. Curtis frowned a brief repetition of her command (she did not want for will, and usually had her own way), and then Polly obeyed—presenting "her compliments and thanks to Mr. Walter Scott, but her mother did not allow her to accept presents."

Jane fulfilled Polly's prediction of being vexed.

She said sending poor Walter's music back was making much ado about nothing; musical people always gave each other music, and she would have liked to see it herself if it was new. She never did see it, however; for Walter took his rebuff seriously, and called no more on Mrs. Curtis and her daughters. It was after this incident that Polly mooted her longing for liberty, and though nobody suggested any connexion between the two circumstances, they were connected. If young men had been all roaring lions and fiery dragons, Mrs. Curtis could not have more obstinately shut her doors against them, or preached severer warnings of the danger of them to Polly in private. Two results ensued. Polly learnt to think of young men as vanity and vexation, and of home as dull and cheerless; and then the idea occurred to her that if other girls worked, why should not she? "Why should not she?" echoed her mother, and after a very little discussion her idea matured into a positive wish and desire to go out as a governess. Jane resisted until she saw that resistance was fruitless; then she gave in; and while Polly began to prepare her modest wardrobe for a start in the world, Jane inquired amongst the parents of her pupils for a suitable place where she might earn her first experiences mildly.

"I must have my evenings to improve myself, and I don't want to be treated as 'one of the family'—I'd rather not," Polly announced, full of her coming independence, and contemptuous of all half measures by which the change might be made easy to her. Jane bade her not expect to have everything just as she liked in other people's houses; she must prepare to conform to their ways, and not expect them to conform one tittle to hers.

But Polly would take no discouragement; she was quite gay and valiant in her fashion of looking the world in the face, and she felt glad, absolutely glad, as if some great good fortune had befallen her, when, just before Christmas, after a long negotiation on paper and a personal interview, she was engaged as governess to the three children of Captain and Mrs. Stapylton, at a salary of twenty pounds the first year, rising five the second and third. The stipulation for evening leisure was agreed to, and Jane and everybody else allowed that, since she *would* go out, it was as nice a beginning as she could have. Captain Stapylton was a military officer on half-pay, and warden of the royal forest of Lanswood; his wife was of a Norminster family, and if Polly stayed with them three years (not less than three years), and used her opportunities as she ought, she would then be equal to a higher situation and a handsome salary—so, at least, reasoned Miss Mill, who, having been a governess and about in the world nearly half a century, of course knew all about it; and little Polly, listening to her delighted, felt her responsibility and assumed grave airs of being about a hundred years old, which tickled the fancy of some foolish people so excessively that they were more than ever inclined to treat her with affectionate disrespect. Jane said to Miss Mill that she was not cut out for a governess, and Miss Mill replied that anybody could see that; but Polly had a lofty sense of her own dignity, and not the remotest idea of the temptation she was to silly kind folks; and thus she started on her career with clear-eyed, happy-hearted confidence, brave and safe as Una with the lion, all the aim of her life being personal independence and ability to save Jane and help her mother.

CHAPTER II.

Polly Curtis was blessed in a dear school friend, three months her elder in experience of the world, with whom she kept up a brisk correspondence, nobody but themselves being able to imagine what they found to say in their long and frequent letters. To Margaret Livingstone, with all appropriate seriousness, she had confided every step in her progress towards liberty, and immediately her engagement with Mrs. Stapylton was concluded, she wrote off to her a solemn statement of its conditions, winding up with the expression of a hope that she might be strengthened to do her duty in the station of life to which it had pleased providence to call her, and a brief moral essay thereupon:

"You know, dear Maggie, I am not like you—a bird of the air, a lily of the field, created neither to toil nor spin—I am a brown working bee, and, thank God, I don't care for pomps and vanities. Rich girls can afford to dream of love and lovers, but I have pruned the wings of my fancy, for they are as far from me as the mountains in the moon. All my ambition is to be a good governess, and if I can ever work myself up to a salary of a hundred a year, I shall be the proudest and happiest of women. Don't talk to me of marrying; it is not in my way; my mother never lets a day pass without warning me of its perils and disappointments. She prevented Jane marrying, and she would prevent me, if I wished it ever so; but I shall be safe from temptation in my schoolroom at the Warden House. If Lanswood is only eight miles from your home, could you not ride over and see me some day when the days are longer? I am busy getting my things ready, and I go the first week in February. There is something inspiriting in the thought that henceforth I shall be my own mistress, winning the bread I eat, and depending on no one. But I'll confess it to you (I would not for the world confess it to Jane) that now and then suddenly, when I think of it, my heart gives a spasm as if it were going to turn coward; but my head is not afraid, not a bit. We must make the most of our time in writing before I go, for I do not expect to have very much leisure when teaching begins. You will often think of me, dear Maggie, I know; but don't be sorry and pitiful over me. I am a tough little subject, and is not the back made for the burden? Besides, it is the will of God, &c., &c., &c."

At this point of Polly's letter, Maggie, who was a big-boned tall creature, with a great

tender heart, broke down and began to cry. She could not bear to think of the pretty clever little darling she loved and worshipped so having to *work*, for work and self-dependence were unintelligible ideas to Maggie's indolent dreamy temper. She could not understand her dear Polly slaving like the teachers she had known; it seemed like setting a lark to plough. Boisterously in on her tears broke Bob, her brother, the man of the house, and heard all her complaint, and laughed at it, and then, to comfort her, suggested that Polly should be invited for a week to Blackthorn Grange before she went to Lanswood.

"Would you like her to come, Bob?" Maggie inquired, with eager wistfulness, as if a thought had sprung up in her mind full grown.

"Yes, if she is pretty," said Bob, coolly.

"She is as pretty as pretty can be. But perhaps mother won't; she could not endure Laura's friend," sighed Maggie, and desponded again. She was, however, the youngest daughter of three, and, being fresh from school, some indulgence was due to her; and when her grief and its reason why were explained, Mrs. Livingstone consented to Polly's being asked for a week—not for longer—until she saw for herself what sort of a little body she was. Maggie wrote in exuberant joy and haste, putting the invitation into the most cordial glad words, and making everything (with Bob's assistance) so smooth and easy on the way to the Grange and forward to the Warden House afterwards, that there was no room for doubt or discussion, only for a plain Yes or No. Jane obtained that it should be Yes, and Polly despatched the reply, in which her smiles and dimples and delight were soberly reflected, as became a young woman about to begin the world on her own account. Bob was permitted to read this letter of Polly's, as a reward for his goodness; but by the time it came, it is sad to record that he was growing rather tired of her praises, which Maggie sang in the ears of the household all day.

"Plague take your Polly Curtis; you can talk of nothing else," cried Laura, whose friend had proved a failure, and this on the very morning of the day when Polly was to arrive; and Fanny, the other sister, who was very good natured as a general thing, went so far as to add that she should not be sorry when Maggie's "governess friend" had been and gone; she was not partial to governesses.

And about half-past four in the soft grey January twilight Polly came. Mrs. Livingstone, mindful of all courtesies, all hospitalities, met her in the porch, and brought her in with a kiss, and Laura and Fanny were very polite, notwithstanding their previous bit of temper; and Maggie, after turning her round ecstatically, and looking at her by fire-light and window-light, declared that she was just like herself, and her own dear darling little mite of a Polly, and what a horrid shame it was to make her a stupid old cross-patch of a governess!

"Maggie!" interposed her mother, with a world of rebuke in her voice.

"Polly does not care what I say, does she?" mumured Maggie, turning her round affectionately and peeping under her bonnet—girls wore cottage-bonnets in those days, which were like eaves over their modest faces.

"I like it," said Polly, and glanced round at the assembly with ineffable patronage and self-possession. She felt inexpressibly important; was she not here on an independent visit, previous to entering on an independent career of praiseworthy labour?

"Oh, you wee bit solemn goosey, come up-stairs!" cried Maggie, and bore her off, dignity and all, to the room they were to share; and the mother and sisters, left behind, laughed gently and said there was something very odd about the little creature, but she seemed nice—not much like a governess, however.

Polly's box had been carried up-stairs before her, and Maggie watched the opening of it with much interest and curiosity.

"I want you to look your very bonniest," said she. "My mother takes the queerest fancies for and against people, and I want her to take a fancy to you. She could not bear Laura's friend, Maria Spinks, and she won't have her here again. She took to you at first sight from the way she kissed you—I know she did, and I'm so glad."

"I am pleased, too—I like to be liked," said Polly. "She is a very grand old lady, Maggie, you never told me."

"Bob is like her—the only one of us that is—he hasn't come home yet; he is out with the hounds to-day—the meet was at Ellerston Gap this morning, and, here is your old pink frock; put it on, Polly; you can't help looking bonnie in your pink."

"Must I? It was my last summer's best. It is too smart a colour for me, now that I am a governess, but Jane said I might wear it out of evenings in the school-room. I have a new brown French merino for Sundays, and this old violet I travelled in for every day; and Jane gave me a new white muslin—not that there is any chance of my wanting such a thing, but she would insist on my having it—and white satin ribbon. I can wear all white, you know. Do you think it is prettily made, Maggie?"

"Oh, you sweet little witch, it's beautiful, and you'll be a fairy in it! You shall wear it to-night, and everybody shall fall in love with you!" cried Maggie. But Polly with intense decision folded it up, and said that, indeed, she was not going to make a show of herself, not even to please her stupid old jewel of a Maggie.

"You never had any sense of the fitness of things, you precious old dear," said she. "Picture me in white muslin and all the rest of you in thick dresses—this is only for a party or a concert, you know. I had better put on my new brown merino."

"I won't have you in brown—brown has nothing to do with my wee little rosy daisy,"

cried Maggie, and grown suddenly impatient of Polly's grave airs, she seized her, shook her, kissed her, never deranging her dignity however, a hairsbreadth. Polly tolerated her caressing patiently and sweetly, it was Maggie's way; and when there was nobody to see, she did not object to her petting and spoiling—it pleased Maggie and did not hurt her—so she said with her admirable coolness, which Maggie was much too humble and adoring ever to resent.

Finally, Polly was arrayed in the pink dress with tucker and cuffs of fine lace, and her glossy brown hair tied round with a pink ribbon—as dainty a little lady as had ever stepped down the stairs of Blackthorn Grange in all the three hundred years since it had been built. It was a farm-house which the Livingstones had tenanted for three generations, but the old beauty of it, with its walled garden and mossy orchard, was still cherished, and the Livingstones, by virtue of descent, connexion, and a small entailed estate in the family, ranked with the minor gentry and the clergy of their neighbourhood. Polly, as she tripped along the hall, said she liked the house, and if she was Maggie, she should feel quite romantic, and proud of living in such a fine ancient place.

The parlour door was ajar, and Mrs. Livingstone overheard the cheerful young voice expressing a sentiment that pleased her. She held out a hand to welcome Polly again, and said: "So I thought when I arrived here after my marriage."

"The window on the stairs was a picture as we went up, with the moon rising and the red bars of sunset behind the great bare trees in the garden; what time of the year did you come?" said Polly, whose sympathy was very quick.

"It was a September evening and the sky all aglow with scarlet and fire. I remember resting in that window-seat, my first rest in my new home; there was a fir-tree standing then that is gone now; but you are cold, child; sit here on this low stool and get warmed. Maggie, you should not have kept her up-stairs so long to starve her."

"I never felt the cold until I saw the fire," said Polly, pleasantly, and deposited herself in the corner between Mrs. Livingstone and the fender, on the low stool as she was bidden, and then looked calmly about at the room and its occupants.

It was a large room, low, and with the beams of the ceiling visible; the wide window was crimson curtained, and all the furniture was old and substantial, but there was neither decoration nor taste anywhere. The three sisters had not an ounce of taste amongst them, and when lilacs, gillyflowers, and roses were over in the garden, the big china bowl on the centre table stood empty, or served as a receptacle for waifs and strays escaped from careless hands and pockets. The sisters were in perfect accord with their unadorned surroundings; large, honest, healthy young women with a good and well-grounded opinion of themselves, and Maggie with just glimmering enough of sentiment besides to feel the charm of a friend like Polly, who was instinct with life and spirit, and a perfect contrast to herself. The inclination to protect and caress her little guest had evidently taken hold of Mrs. Livingstone as it did of so many other warm-hearted people; for twice or thrice, as Polly sat toasting in her corner, the house-mother took up one of her small hands and chafed it gently between her own, and Polly looked at her as she never had occasion to look at her own poor shrewish mother at home. Polly loved her mother, but mothers lose a great deal who keep their children at a distance: so thought Polly thus introduced into the bosom of a family, all the members of which were fond of each other and not afraid to show it.

They were talking rather noisily and several of them together, when there was a bustle in the hall, a loud voice, a loud step, and then the opening of the door, at which appeared a tall young man in a scarlet coat and velvet cap who asked: "Well, hasn't she come?" not seeing the little figure in the corner half hidden by his mother.

"Yes!" cried Maggie, "she is here; stand up, Polly, and say how d'ye do to Bob!"

Polly rose with extreme circumspection and executed the frigid manœuvre that she had been laboriously instructed to perform when a gentleman was introduced, only she blushed with it, which was not in the dancing-school order. Bob brought his spurred heels together with a click, and imitated the bow preposterously—the blush was beyond him; but Polly's eyes were downcast, and she was spared the anguish of seeing her grave airs made fun of by this disrespectful person, whose mother admonished him to go away and make haste for dinner, it was late. Bob obeyed, with a comical grimace at Maggie, which she replied to with a half laugh—rude, very rude; but there was something about that queer little Polly, turned precisian, that provoked it, and her utter unconsciousness of the effect she produced increased the humour of the joke.

When Bob came back to the parlour the servant was just announcing dinner, and the young man stepped briskly across the room to Polly, and bending unnecessarily low, offered her his arm with an exaggerated affectation of courtesy that wakened Maggie's alarm and made her long to box his ears. But Polly took it with beautiful serenity, and kept step with him composedly until he placed her by himself at table in the full light of the lamp—the loveliest little thing that had ever sat there since he was master, as he thought, glancing down at her with more serious approval. And it was capital to hear her talk. How he had expected to hear her talk goodness knows; but when she used the right words about a fox-hunt, and asked if they had had a good run to-day, and if he was in at the death, and who won the brush, it is impossible to say whether he was most

amazed or enchanted by her wonderful cleverness—all the more wonderful in a creature so bewilderingly pretty and sweet.

She was new too, quite new. Bob had never seen anybody in the least like her. Girls usually pretended to be shy of him, partly from liking and a desire to attract, and partly from the reputation he had of being wild. Polly knew nothing about wildness. His mother and sisters adored him, the maid-servant smiled when he spoke, the dogs lay at his feet and were happy. He was no beauty, but he was a fine manly young fellow, and very popular in his neighbourhood. To Polly he seemed a rather mature person—he was not far from thirty—and after the first blush, the sense of her highly responsible position came to her aid, and re-established her in perfect calm. It was delicious to Bob to be looked innocently in the face by those soft brown eyes, and talked to without any sham airs and graces. A strain of jocular compliment was all that was usually required of him when he had a pretty girl at his elbow; but Polly was as good as a lesson in manners; she did not expect compliments, and he had the wit to see she would not like them. So he adopted her tone of conversation with seriousness, only relapsing into his original frame of mind twice or thrice for a moment, when her assumption of sageness and duty became too much for his sense of the ridiculous.

The formality and propriety of the party held out through dinner, but the instant Maggie got Polly into the parlour, she seized her by the waist and whirled her round in a waltz. "Don't, Maggie," said Polly, but entered into the spirit of it all the same; and more, when Fanny good-naturedly opened the piano, and offered to play for them, the music brought Bob, who composed himself in his arm-chair, and looked on, until Maggie popped her partner down breathless on the sofa and herself by her.

"That will do, what a dust you have made," said he, and Polly started and felt abashed at her inappropriate behaviour. Yet a few minutes after Bob was making a dust himself, and learning the new step of Polly, which he knew perfectly; if his sisters had not worshipped him with fear, they would have told her that he was only doing it to tease her and amuse himself. He managed to be most skilfully stupid; a dozen times, at least, did Polly "put his feet in the way of it," as she said, and a dozen times did he fail to do it correctly. He suggested that perhaps if he did it with her, he might succeed in keeping time, but Polly said "No, let him try it with Maggie, she was a better height for him." He, however, did it worst of all with Maggie, and Polly for the honour of her teaching was prevailed on to take him in hand herself.

"But I don't expect you will be able to do it," said she, despairingly.

Fanny at the piano glanced over her shoulder laughing, and even Mrs. Livingstone watched with an amused smile while Bob redeemed his character. He knew how to hold his partner at all events, Polly thought at the start, and it was astonishing how fast he improved with her to keep him in step. In fact, he caught it up directly, though when Polly wished him to try it again with Maggie, his awkwardness was, if possible, more conspicuous than before.

"This is very discouraging; of course I don't mean that you can help it," said Polly, in the most admirable tone of a patient teacher dealing with a dull but willing pupil.

The inconvenient Maggie burst out in a long suppressed merry peal of laughter: "O, you dear little comical darling, Bob is only making fun; he can dance as well as any of us!" cried she.

Polly gazed up for half a minute with blank dismay at Bob, then joined in the laugh against herself, and said: "If you are that sort of person, I shall take care how I give you a dancing-lesson again!"

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THE MOONSTONE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WOMAN IN WHITE," &C. &C.

SECOND PERIOD. THE DISCOVERY OF THE TRUTH. (1848—1849.)

THIRD NARRATIVE.

THE NARRATIVE OF FRANKLIN BLAKE.

CHAPTER VII.

AT the moment when I showed myself in the doorway, Rachel rose from the piano.

I closed the door behind me. We confronted each other in silence, with the full length of the room between us. The movement she had made in rising, appeared to be the one exertion of which she was capable. All use of every other faculty, bodily or mental, seemed to be merged in the mere act of looking at me.

A fear crossed my mind that I had shown myself too suddenly. I advanced a few steps towards her. I said gently, "Rachel!"

The sound of my voice brought the life back to her limbs, and the colour to her face. She advanced, on her side, still without speaking. Slowly, as if she was acting under some influence independent of her own will, she came nearer and nearer to me; the warm dusky colour flushing her cheeks, the light of reviving intelligence brightening every instant in her eyes. I forgot the object that had brought me into her presence; I forgot the vile suspicion that rested on my good name—I forgot every consideration, past, present, and future, which I was bound to remember. I saw nothing but the woman I loved coming nearer and nearer to me. She trembled; she stood irresolute. I could resist it no longer — I caught her in my arms, and covered her face with kisses.

There was a moment when I thought the kisses were returned; a moment when it seemed as if she, too, might have forgotten. Almost before the idea could shape itself in my mind, her first voluntary action made me feel that she remembered. With a cry which was like a cry of horror—with a strength which I doubt if I could have resisted if I had tried—she thrust me back from her. I saw merciless anger in her eyes; I saw merciless contempt on her lips. She looked me over, from head to foot, as she might have looked at a stranger who had insulted her.

"You coward!" she said. "You mean, miserable, heartless coward!"

Those were her first words! The most unendurable reproach that a woman can address to a man, was the reproach that she picked out to address to Me.

"I remember the time, Rachel," I said, "when you could have told me that I had offended you in a worthier way than that. I beg your pardon."

Something of the bitterness that I felt may have communicated itself to my voice. At the first words of my reply, her eyes, which had been turned away the moment before, looked back at me unwillingly. She answered in a low tone, with a sullen submission of manner which was quite new in my experience of her.

"Perhaps there is some excuse for me," she said. "After what you have done, it seems a mean action, on your part, to find your way to me as you have found it to day. It seems a cowardly experiment, to try an experiment on my weakness for you. It seems a cowardly surprise, to surprise me into letting you kiss me. But that is only a woman's view. I ought to have known it couldn't be your view. I should have done better if I had controlled myself, and said nothing."

The apology was more unendurable than the insult. The most degraded man living would have felt humiliated by it.

"If my honour was not in your hands," I said, "I would leave you this instant, and never see you again. You have spoken of what I have done. What have I done?"

"What have you done! *You* ask that question of Me?"

"I ask it."

"I have kept your infamy a secret," she answered. "And I have suffered the consequences of concealing it. Have I no claim to be spared the insult of your asking me what you have done? Is *all* sense of gratitude dead in you? You were once a gentleman. You were once dear to my mother, and dearer still to me——"

Her voice failed her. She dropped into a chair, and turned her back on me, and covered her face with her hands.

I waited a little before I trusted myself to say any more. In that moment of silence, I hardly know which I felt most keenly—the sting which her contempt had planted in me, or the proud resolution which shut me out from all community with her distress.

"If you will not speak first," I said, "I must. I have come here with something serious to say to you. Will you do me the common justice of listening while I say it?"

She neither moved, nor answered. I made no second appeal to her; I never advanced an inch nearer to her chair. With a pride which was as obstinate as her pride, I told her of my discovery at the Shivering Sand, and of all that had led to it. The narrative, of necessity, occupied some little time. From beginning to end, she never looked round at me, and she never uttered a word.

I kept my temper. My whole future depended, in all probability, on my not losing possession of myself at that moment. The time had come to put Mr. Bruff's theory to the test. In the breathless interest of trying that experiment, I moved round so as to place myself in front of her.

"I have a question to ask you," I said. "It obliges me to refer again to a painful subject. Did Rosanna Spearman show you the nightgown? Yes, or No?"

She started to her feet; and walked close up to me of her own accord. Her eyes looked me searchingly in the face, as if to read something there which they had never read yet.

"Are you mad?" she asked.

I still restrained myself. I said quietly, "Rachel, will you answer my question?"

She went on, without heeding me.

"Have you some object to gain which I don't understand? Some mean fear about the future, in which I am concerned? They say your father's death has made you a rich man. Have you come here to compensate me for the loss of my Diamond? And have you heart enough left to feel ashamed of your errand? Is *that* the secret of your pretence of innocence, and your story about Rosanna Spearman? Is there a motive of shame at the bottom of all the falsehood, this time?"

I stopped her there. I could control myself no longer.

"You have done me an infamous wrong!" I broke out hotly. "You suspect me of stealing your Diamond. I have a right to know, and I *will* know, the reason why!"

"Suspect you!" she exclaimed, her anger rising with mine. "*You villain, I saw you take the Diamond with my own eyes!*"

The revelation which burst upon me in those words, the overthrow which they instantly accomplished of the whole view of the case on which Mr. Bruff had relied, struck me helpless. Innocent as I was, I stood before her in silence. To her eyes, to any eyes, I must have looked like a man overwhelmed by the discovery of his own guilt.

She drew back from the spectacle of my humiliation, and of her triumph. The sudden silence that had fallen upon me seemed to frighten her. "I spared you, at the time," she said. "I would have spared you now, if you had not forced me to speak." She moved away as if to leave the room—and hesitated before she got to the door. "Why did you come here to humiliate yourself?" she asked. "Why did you come here to humiliate me?" She went on a few steps, and paused once more. "For God's sake, say something!" she exclaimed, passionately. "If you have any mercy left, don't let me degrade myself in this way! Say something—and drive me out of the room!"

I advanced towards her, hardly conscious of what I was doing. I had possibly some confused idea of detaining her until she had told me more. From the moment when I knew that the evidence on which I stood condemned in Rachel's mind, was the evidence of her own eyes, nothing—not even my conviction of my own innocence—was clear in my mind. I took her by the hand; I tried to speak firmly and to the purpose. All I could say was, "Rachel, you once loved me."

She shuddered, and looked away from me. Her hand lay powerless and trembling in mine. "Let go of it," she said faintly.

My touch seemed to have the same effect on her which the sound of my voice had produced when I first entered the room. After she had said the word which called me a coward, after she had made the avowal which branded me as a thief—while her hand lay in mine I was her master still!

I drew her gently back into the middle of the room. I seated her by the side of me. "Rachel," I said, "I can't explain the contradiction in what I am going to tell you. I can only speak the truth as you have spoken it. You saw me—with your own eyes, you saw me take the Diamond. Before God who hears us, I declare that I now know I took it for the first time! Do you doubt me still?"

She had neither heeded nor heard me. "Let go of my hand," she repeated faintly. That was her only answer. Her head sank on my shoulder; and her hand unconsciously closed on mine, at the moment when she asked me to release it.

I refrained from pressing the question. But there my forbearance stopped. My chance of ever holding up my head again among honest men depended on my chance of inducing her to make her disclosure complete. The one hope left for me was the hope that she might have overlooked something in the chain of evidence—some mere trifle, perhaps, which might nevertheless, under careful investigation, be made the means of vindicating my innocence in the end. I own I kept possession of her hand. I own I spoke to her with all that I could summon back of the sympathy and the confidence of the bygone time.

"I want to ask you something," I said. "I want you to tell me everything that happened, from the time when we wished each other good

night, to the time when you saw me take the Diamond."

She lifted her head from my shoulder, and made an effort to release her hand. "Oh, why go back to it?" she said. "Why go back to it?"

"I will tell you why, Rachel. You are the victim, and I am the victim, of some monstrous delusion which has worn the mask of truth. If we look at what happened on the night of your birthday, together, we may end in understanding each other yet."

Her head dropped back on my shoulder. The tears gathered in her eyes, and fell slowly over her cheeks. "Oh!" she said, "have *I* never had that hope? Have *I* not tried to see it, as you are trying now?"

"You have tried by yourself," I answered. "You have not tried with me to help you."

Those words seemed to awaken in her something of the hope which I felt myself when I uttered them. She replied to my questions with more than docility—she exerted her intelligence; she willingly opened her whole mind to me.

"Let us begin," I said, "with what happened after we had wished each other good night. Did you go to bed? or did you sit up?"

"I went to bed."

"Did you notice the time? Was it late?"

"Not very. About twelve o'clock, I think."

"Did you fall asleep?"

"No. I couldn't sleep that night."

"You were restless?"

"I was thinking of you."

The answer almost unmanned me. Something in the tone, even more than in the words, went straight to my heart. It was only after pausing a little first that I was able to go on.

"Had you any light in your room?" I asked.

"None—until I got up again, and lit my candle."

"How long was that, after you had gone to bed?"

"About an hour after, I think. About one o'clock."

"Did you leave your bedroom?"

"I was going to leave it. I had put on my dressing-gown; and I was going into my sitting-room to get a book——"

"Had you opened your bedroom door?"

"I had just opened it."

"But you had not gone into the sitting-room?"

"No—I was stopped from going into it."

"What stopped you?"

"I saw a light, under the door; and I heard footsteps approaching it."

"Were you frightened?"

"Not then. I knew my poor mother was a bad sleeper; and I remembered that she had tried hard, that evening, to persuade me to let her take charge of my Diamond. She was unreasonably anxious about it, as I thought; and I fancied she was coming to me to see if I was in bed, and to speak to me about the Diamond again, if she found that I was up."

"What did you do?"

"I blew out my candle, so that she might think I was in bed. I was unreasonable, on my side—I was determined to keep my Diamond in the place of my own choosing."

"After blowing the candle out, did you go back to bed?"

"I had no time to go back. At the moment when I blew the candle out, the sitting-room door opened, and I saw——"

"You saw?"

"You."

"Dressed as usual?"

"No."

"In my nightgown?"

"In your nightgown—with your bedroom candle in your hand."

"Alone?"

"Alone."

"Could you see my face?"

"Yes."

"Plainly?"

"Quite plainly. The candle in your hand showed it to me."

"Were my eyes open?"

"Yes."

"Did you notice anything strange in them? Anything like a fixed, vacant expression?"

"Nothing of the sort. Your eyes were bright—brighter than usual. You looked about in the room, as if you knew you were where you ought not to be, and as if you were afraid of being found out."

"Did you observe one thing when I came into the room—did you observe how I walked?"

"You walked as you always do. You came in as far as the middle of the room—and then you stopped and looked about you."

"What did you do, on first seeing me?"

"I could do nothing. I was petrified. I couldn't speak, I couldn't call out, I couldn't even move to shut my door."

"Could I see you, where you stood?"

"You might certainly have seen me. But you never looked towards me. It's useless to ask the question. I am sure you never saw me."

"How are you sure?"

"Would you have taken the Diamond? would you have acted as you did afterwards? would you be here now—if you had seen that I was awake and looking at you? Don't make me talk of that part of it! I want to answer you quietly. Help me to keep as calm as I can. Go on to something else."

She was right—in every way, right. I went on to other things.

"What did I do, after I had got to the middle of the room, and had stopped there?"

"You turned away, and went straight to the corner near the window—where my Indian cabinet stands."

"When I was at the cabinet, my back must have been turned towards you. How did you see what I was doing?"

"When you moved, I moved."

"So as to see what I was about with my hands?"

"There are three glasses in my sitting-room. As you stood there, I saw all that you did, reflected in one of them."

"What did you see?"

"You put your candle on the top of the cabinet. You opened, and shut, one drawer after another, until you came to the drawer in which I had put my Diamond. You looked at the open drawer for a moment. And then you put your hand in, and took the Diamond out."

"How do you know I took the Diamond out?"

"I saw your hand go into the drawer. And I saw the gleam of the stone, between your finger and thumb, when you took your hand out."

"Did my hand approach the drawer again—to close it, for instance?"

"No. You had the Diamond in your right hand; and you took the candle from the top of the cabinet with your left hand."

"Did I look about me again, after that?"

"No."

"Did I leave the room immediately?"

"No. You stood quite still, for what seemed a long time. I saw your face sideways in the glass. You looked like a man thinking, and dissatisfied with his own thoughts."

"What happened next?"

"You roused yourself on a sudden, and you went straight out of the room."

"Did I close the door after me?"

"No. You passed out quickly into the passage, and left the door open."

"And then?"

"Then, your light disappeared, and the sound of your steps died away, and I was left alone in the dark."

"Did nothing happen—from that time, to the time when the whole house knew that the Diamond was lost?"

"Nothing."

"Are you sure of that? Might you not have been asleep a part of the time?"

"I never slept. I never went back to my bed. Nothing happened until Penelope came in, at the usual time in the morning."

I dropped her hand, and rose, and took a turn in the room. Every question that I could put had been answered. Every detail that I could desire to know had been placed before me. I had even reverted to the idea of sleep-walking, and the idea of intoxication; and, again, the worthlessness of the one theory and the other had been proved—on the authority, this time, of the witness who had seen me. What was to be said next? what was to be done next? There rose the horrible fact of the Theft—the one visible, tangible object that confronted me, in the midst of the impenetrable darkness which enveloped all besides! Not a glimpse of light to guide me, when I had possessed myself of Rosanna Spearman's secret at the Shivering Sand. And not a glimpse of light now, when I had appealed to Rachel herself, and had heard the hateful story of the night from her own lips.

She was the first, this time, to break the silence.

"Well?" she said, "you have asked, and I have answered. You have made me hope something from all this, because *you* hoped something from it. What have you to say now?"

The tone in which she spoke warned me that my influence over her was a lost influence once more.

"We were to look at what happened on my birthday night, together," she went on; "and we were then to understand each other. Have we done that?"

She waited pitilessly for my reply. In answering her I committed a fatal error—I let the exasperating helplessness of my situation get the better of my self-control. Rashly and uselessly, I reproached her for the silence which had kept me until that moment in ignorance of the truth.

"If you had spoken when you ought to have spoken," I began; "if you had done me the common justice to explain yourself——"

She broke in on me with a cry of fury. The few words I had said seemed to have lashed her on the instant into a frenzy of rage.

"Explain myself!" she repeated. "Oh! is there another man like this in the world? I spare him, when my heart is breaking; I screen him when my own character is at stake; and *he*—of all human beings, *he*—turns on me now, and tells me that I ought to have explained myself! After believing in him as I did, after loving him as I did, after thinking of him by day, and dreaming of him by night—he wonders why I didn't charge him with his disgrace the first time we met: 'My heart's darling, you are a Thief! My hero whom I love and honour, you have crept into my room under cover of the night, and stolen my Diamond!' That is what I ought to have said. You villain, you mean, mean, mean villain, I would have lost fifty Diamonds, rather than see your face lying to me, as I see it lying now!"

I took up my hat. In mercy to *her*—yes! I can honestly say it—in mercy to *her*, I turned away without a word, and opened the door by which I had entered the room.

She followed, and snatched the door out of my hand; she closed it, and pointed back to the place that I had left.

"No!" she said. "Not yet! It seems that *I* owe a justification of my conduct to *you*. You shall stay and hear it. Or you shall stoop to the lowest infamy of all, and force your way out."

It wrung my heart to see her; it wrung my heart to hear it. I answered by a sign—it was all I could do—that I submitted myself to her will.

The crimson flush of anger began to fade out of her face, as I went back, and took my chair in silence. She waited a little, and steadied herself. When she went on, but one sign of

feeling was discernible in her. She spoke without looking at me. Her hands were fast clasped in her lap, and her eyes were fixed on the ground.

"I ought to have done you the common justice to explain myself," she said, repeating my own words. "You shall see whether I did try to do you justice, or not. I told you just now that I never slept, and never returned to my bed, after you had left my sitting-room. It's useless to trouble you by dwelling on what I thought—you wouldn't understand my thoughts—I will only tell you what I did, when time enough had passed to help me to recover myself. I refrained from alarming the house, and telling everybody what had happened—as I ought to have done. In spite of what I had seen, I was fond enough of you to believe—no matter what!—any impossibility, rather than admit it to my own mind that you were deliberately a thief. I thought and thought—and I ended in writing to you."

"I never received the letter."

"I know you never received it. Wait a little, and you shall hear why. My letter would have told you nothing openly. It would not have ruined you for life, if it had fallen into some other person's hands. It would only have said—in a manner which you yourself could not possibly have mistaken—that I had reason to know you were in debt, and that it was in my experience and in my mother's experience of you, that you were not very discreet, or very scrupulous about how you got money when you wanted it. You would have remembered the visit of the French lawyer, and you would have known what I referred to. If you had read on with some interest after that, you would have come to an offer I had to make to you—the offer, privately (not a word, mind, to be said openly about it between us!), of the loan of as large a sum of money as I could get.—And I would have got it!" she exclaimed, her colour beginning to rise again, and her eyes looking up at me once more. "I would have pledged the Diamond myself, if I could have got the money in no other way! In those words, I wrote to you. Wait! I did more than that. I arranged with Penelope to give you the letter when nobody was near. I planned to shut myself into my bedroom, and to have the sitting-room left open and empty all the morning. And I hoped—with all my heart and soul I hoped!—that you would take the opportunity, and put the Diamond back secretly in the drawer."

I attempted to speak. She lifted her hand impatiently, and stopped me. In the rapid alternations of her temper, her anger was beginning to rise again. She got up from her chair, and approached me.

"I know what you are going to say," she went on. "You are going to remind me again that you never received my letter. I can tell you why. I tore it up."

"For what reason?" I asked.

"For the best of reasons. I preferred tearing it up to throwing it away upon such a man as you! What was the first news that reached me in the morning? Just as my little plan was complete, what did I hear? I heard that you—you!!—were the foremost person in the house in fetching the police. You were the active man; you were the leader; you were working harder than any of them to recover the jewel! You even carried your audacity far enough to ask to speak to *me* about the loss of the Diamond—the Diamond which you yourself had stolen; the Diamond which was all the time in your own hands! After that proof of your horrible falseness and cunning, I tore up my letter. But even then—even when I was maddened by the searching and questioning of the policeman, whom *you* had sent in—even then, there was some infatuation in my mind which wouldn't let me give you up. I said to myself, 'He has played his vile farce before everybody else in the house. Let me try if he can play it before Me.' Somebody told me you were on the terrace. I went down to the terrace. I forced myself to look at you; I forced myself to speak to you. Have you forgotten what I said?"

I might have answered that I remembered every word of it. But what purpose, at that moment, would the answer have served?

How could I tell her that what she had said had astonished me, had distressed me, had suggested to me that she was in a state of dangerous nervous excitement, had even roused a moment's doubt in my mind whether the loss of the jewel was as much a mystery to her as to the rest of us—but had never once given me so much as a glimpse at the truth? Without the shadow of a proof to produce in vindication of my innocence, how could I persuade her that I knew no more than the veriest stranger could have known of what was really in her thoughts when she spoke to me on the terrace?

"It may suit your convenience to forget; it suits my convenience to remember," she went on. "I know what I said—for I considered it with myself, before I said it. I gave you one opportunity after another of owning the truth. I left nothing unsaid that I *could* say—short of actually telling you that I knew you had committed the theft. And all the return you made, was to look at me with your vile pretence of astonishment, and your false face of innocence—just as you have looked at me to-day; just as you are looking at me now! I left you, that morning, knowing you at last for what you were—for what you are—as base a wretch as ever walked the earth!"

"If you had spoken out at the time, you might have left me, Rachel, knowing that you had cruelly wronged an innocent man."

"If I had spoken out before other people," she retorted, with another burst of indignation, "you would have been disgraced for life! If I had spoken out to no ears but your's, you would have denied it, as you are denying it now! Do you think I should have believed you? Would a man hesitate at a lie, who had done what I saw *you* do—who had behaved about it

afterwards, as I saw *you* behave? I tell you again, I shrank from the horror of hearing you lie, after the horror of seeing you thieve. You talk as if this was a misunderstanding which a few words might have set right! Well! the misunderstanding is at an end. Is the thing set right? No! the thing is just where it was. I don't believe you *now!* I don't believe you found the nightgown, I don't believe in Rosanna Spearman's letter, I don't believe a word you have said. You stole it—I saw you! You affected to help the police—I saw you! You pledged the Diamond to the money-lender in London—I am sure of it! You cast the suspicion of your disgrace (thanks to my base silence!) on an innocent man! You fled to the Continent with your plunder the next morning! After all that vileness, there was but one thing more you *could* do. You could come here, with a last falsehood on your lips—you could come here, and tell me that I have wronged you!"

If I had stayed a moment more, I know not what words might have escaped me which I should have remembered with vain repentance and regret. I passed by her, and opened the door for the second time. For the second time—with the frantic perversity of a roused woman—she caught me by the arm, and barred my way out.

"Let me go, Rachel," I said. "It will be better for both of us. Let me go."

The hysterical passion swelled in her bosom—her quickened convulsive breathing almost beat on my face, as she held me back at the door.

"Why did you come here?" she persisted, desperately. "I ask you again—why did you come here? Are you afraid I shall expose you? Now you are a rich man, now you have got a place in the world, now you may marry the best lady in the land—are you afraid I shall say the words which I have never said yet to anybody but you? I can't say the words! I can't expose you! I am worse, if worse can be, than you are yourself." Sobs and tears burst from her. She struggled with them fiercely; she held me more and more firmly. "I can't tear you out of my heart," she said, "even now! You may trust in the shameful, shameful weakness which can only struggle against you in this way!" She suddenly let go of me—she threw up her hands, and wrung them frantically in the air. "Any other woman living would shrink from the disgrace of touching him!" she exclaimed. "Oh, God! I despise myself even more heartily than I despise *him!*"

The tears were forcing their way into my eyes, in spite of me—the horror of it was to be endured no longer.

"You shall know that you have wronged me, yet," I said. "Or you shall never see me again!"

With those words, I left her. She started up from the chair on which she had dropped the moment before: she started up—the noble creature!—and followed me across the outer room, with a last merciful word at parting.

"Franklin!" she said, "I forgive you! Oh, Franklin! Franklin! we shall never meet again. Say you forgive *me!*"

I turned, so as to let my face show her that I was past speaking—I turned, and waved my hand, and saw her dimly, as in a vision, through the tears that had conquered me at last.

The next moment, the worst bitterness of it was over. I was out in the garden again. I saw her, and heard her, no more.

BIRDS-EYE PARIS.

I. THE GREAT HOTEL.

The rather serious business of "visiting" one's baggage duly performed in the great gloomy Hall of Customs, at the mosque-like station "of the North," the heavy streets of a commercial tone that radiate from it, judiciously depress the soul and prepare it for a brilliant rebound. Of a sudden comes a sweep round a corner, with a crack of the whip, like the tap of harlequin's sword on the canvas, then the slate-coloured gate of St. Denis, alive with the pigtail glories of the great Louis, passes away like a scene, and the real glories and decorations of the gayest and most theatrical of cities set in. That is always the most welcome of moments, when we debouch on the boulevards. We see the airy trees, the broad streets, the noble and dignified houses, rising, with tier after tier of balcony, which seem all chocolate and gold; we see the Moorish kiosques, the little temples where the newspapers are sold, the glitter of the cafés with glimpses of crystal halls beyond; and the bright stream of men and women passing and repassing, never ceasing, never halting, always glittering like a broad ribbon shot with every known colour. This is an old theme, but that first sight of Paris is ever new.

There is a certain luxury and sense of state in sweeping along the gay promenades, through an archway into a vast courtyard, already crowded with carriages and omnibuses, strewn with luggage, filled with uniformed porters and officials, surrounded with glistening bureaux all lighted up, and whose light comes flashing through the leaves of orange-trees. From higher windows, faces look down, on a lower terrace, gentlemen lounge smoking, and lean on the balustrade. All is warm and sheltered, for overhead is a vast glass roof. This gay and busy scene is the court of The Great Hotel at its hour of reception, when all nations arrive, and want rooms.

At the "Bureau of Reception"—and everything appertaining to the great hotel seems to be done in a separate office—an English official has a hard time of it, allotting rooms, talking in half a dozen tongues, always able to know his countrymen at the first word—a recognition, perhaps, a little mortifying to them. He checks his five hundred rooms or so by a little printed list of the numbers, all on a small card, which shows him the state of his house at a glance.

The "great" lift seems far more luxurious than those at home, being all lined with crimson velvet, ceiling and sides, the artist having before his mind the model of a railway carriage. We go up at a sort of express pace—à vapeur, I believe—and not at the easy jog-trot of the Langham or Charing conveyance. A little occasional clank, like the "click-click" of a capstan, hints a good precaution in case of any breakage, when the "machine" would be caught and held by its own teeth. The galleries are all laid out in vast and most confusing rings, and the doors are so neat and slight-looking, each with its number and window, that it is hard not to think of an opera lobby, and call for the box-keeper. They are placed two together, which adds to the illusion. When night sets in, a general air of desertion prevails; the "service," which is found in a corner, disappears, and shuts its door, and the traveller has been known to go wandering round and round these blank circles, looking for the "service," and for his key, meeting no one, seemingly destined to "circulate" for ever in these awful halls. At last he hears a step, and falls in with a belated traveller, who tells him he must try the "sonnette," and shows him a little electrical "button" in the wall, a touch on which sets free a whirring alarm, and soon brings a boy-waiter in his shirt-sleeves from one of the doors. The boy-waiter has a precocious French gruffness added to the gruffness consequent on being roused from his sleep. The number is not in his beat, the traveller must go round quite to the other side of the house, and then he disappears "grommelant." There the "button" is again found, and rouses another sleepy waiter, who is equally dissatisfied, but knows nothing of the key, which is at last found with infinite difficulty. The administration must have a malicious joy in inflaming the natural exasperation of menials when "they hear the bell;" and towards this end have hit on the crafty device of making it jangle on by electricity in the most ear-piercing and odious way, until the servant comes to stop it by pressing a button. Often do we see the summoned menial rushing with a look of disgust and fury on his face to stay this loathsome tintamarre; otherwise the alarm would go on to the crack of doom. This notion might be commended with advantage to our monster London hotels, where the impatient guest has to give a good hard pull, to produce a faint and little regarded twang.

About Paris houses there is rich indistinction of detail—luxury of windows, balconies, flowers, tracery, and golden inscriptions which proclaim the name of the occupant with bazaar-like magnificence. No better background could be conceived. Every house has a picturesque instinct of its own, and takes the most inviting shape it can. Above all, how bright, how inviting, the playhouses, when the doors have opened, lamps blazing, the eager audience in military queue. The police too—what sinuous cocked hats and gracefully draped cloaks!

These endless miles of new stone palaces, which the prefect baron has reeled off as from a machine, will grow dark and grimy like the old dungeon streets of the pre-Adamite Paris. But our neighbours have a remedy, which they apply in the most theatrical way. A great crowd is standing gaping, while a huge steam-engine is puffing and snorting in front of the suffering house. Men in the grand tenue, which is "of rigour" in the diving world, are hung out on little stages, all up and down the various stories, with hose and nozzles. Others scrub and scrape with a will, and much self-sacrifice, the law of their task requiring that scrubber and scraper should work in the full force of the deluge of water streaming upon him. The theatrical part, however, was a huge placard, announcing to the world that the attack had begun "last night at six o'clock," and would be concluded "that evening AT FOUR!" This preciseness was amusing, but they kept their word: and as I came by at the hour fixed, the dripping men were down; the engine was there, but the waters were gone; and the house had quite a healthy glowing air after this wholesome towelling. The process will do for bricks, so the "director" informed me; and the hint might be useful for the dark skins and faces of certain London streets, grim with the dirt of a century. But in street business we might get an old woman's face full of "wrinkles" from these frivolous French. As to watering the roads, the great cart, which takes long to fill and takes short to empty, is as sacred in the eyes of dirt contractors and parish authorities as the car of Juggernaut to that deity's parishioners. Yet that system of little light pipes, broken into short lengths and running on casters, with a nozzle directed by its operator, seems far simpler. It is surprising how deftly he directs this apparatus—the snake-like pipe wheeling lightly after him, while, as a carriage comes in the way, he turns a cock and shuts off the stream. So with this huge steam engine—enormous, mammoth-like—which, on comparison with the humbler monster that made his debût in Park-lane, seemed constructed on sounder principles. He of Park-lane had three rollers, and ran, as it were, on three wheels, one in front and two behind—but the Boulevard leviathan towered loftily on two huge rollers, each his own full breadth, and, moving forward slowly, crunched everything contemptuously. This creature sought the darkness; for his works, if not evil, were noisy and inconvenient, which, of course, to the Parisian, was worse than evil. Each night, as we return at midnight, we find him getting ready—stuffing himself with coal; and presently see him grinding mournfully along, hearse-like, an elephant lying coffined within. The street lamps, too, of a green bronze, most elegant in pattern, all but taking away the mean association of gas, and which put to shame our yellow tottering, "skimpy," and most grotesque familiars, which seem to stagger tipsy-like, and throw out spider legs and arms.

II. PARIS DINING.

When the Great Hotel feasts us, it becomes a very sumptuous and important business. Down in the reading salon the Americans and English begin to cluster thick, a little hungry and impatient. There is a little theatrical air in the preparations, and one feature is very artful as a specimen of la haute politique. Grooms of the chamber make their appearance —mutes in very shiny black and with silver chains on their shoulders in the lord mayor fashion—and at the same instant a series of blinds along a row of stately windows are drawn up simultaneously, and we see the glittering semicircular hall within, blazing with lights, gorgeous with colours, and laid out with tables of refreshing snowiness. The soldiers are at their posts, ready, their weapons under their arms. Flowers bloom everywhere, and the whole seems an Arabian Nights' scene. The hungry man, who is just leaving, and says the whole is "a monstrous imposition," stops short, irresolutely, looking in wistfully. He has a journey down town before him, but that prospect decides him. The "administration" enters; a bureau is improvised for tickets; a strange little cupboard opens afar off for coats and hats, which is grandly described as the "VESTIAIRE;" with a loud clatter the glass doors open, and the flood pours in.

It is a semicircular room, decorated in the Kursaal style, all gold and colour, and Louis Quinze figures, and the largest Algerian onyx clock ever seen, supported by noble bronze figures the size of life. Everything is luxury. The waiters are like noblemen's servants, the service admirable, the cookery not to be gainsaid. There was an ambition and variety in the courses: we had two sorts of fish; preparations with the unfailing truffles; sweetbreads and small delicacies, with sweets of "the higher order," unfamiliar to the ordinary hotel curriculum, like "the Macedonian;" while a superior ordinaire, which indeed so styles itself with a misplaced modesty, but which might take the title of claret—importers with less claims have done so—was renewed with an abundance that almost reached waste. More chamberlains with chains walked about in a stately fashion. The worst was the ceremony was rather too protracted—the crying evil of table d'hôtes; and for this two hours' magnificence, the complacent sense of being thus royally served, the charge was but the fee an attorney charges, "to attendance, &c.," namely, a paltry six and eightpence.

We may pass by the more well-known temples; "The Three Brothers Provincial," Vefour, Vercy, and the newer Bignon. Their appas is more or less familiar, and old ground. But the "system Duval," latest gastronomical development, deserves, to use the epistolary formula, "the assurance of our highest consideration." This exploitation is very significant, and has been so successful that it bids fair to revolutionise the science of popular eating. The French, it is well known, eat for amusement sake; it is one of the many pleasures they discount to the last shilling, so long as they "have a coat to their backs," or even after they have lost the more indispensable one to their stomachs. With so many of the nation always eating abroad, and wishing to eat abroad simply and cheaply, it was requisite to find some greater field than could be discovered in the restricted and old-fashioned area of the café's. Duval, who was brought to the horizon in his fullest splendour about the date of the last Exhibition, is the new reformer. He may have taken the hint from the great Glasgow eating houses, but his design reaches many stages higher, and belongs to a more refined level. The problem he wished to solve and has solved, was to combine the comfort and ease of a café, with the very highest development of cheapness. This was attempted before, in the cheap and nasty results of the "fixed price" places, where though the cost was certain (dinner at two francs fifty cents, vin compris), everything else was uncertain, and mysterious, and confused, and horrible. Dinner was more a speculation as to the nature of substances than a meal. But the café Cagmag has been already reported on in this journal.

We find our way to Duval's, in one of the streets beyond the Palais Royal. It has quite a châlet air, and into which the people are pouring literally en masse. Entering, we find a vast hall, in the small Crystal Palace style, only with the châlet element, the varnished and stained wood, predominant, and light galleries running round. It is well lit, and is as cheerful and bright and comfortable a place as could be conceived. It is full of little tables, and full at that moment of people who are dining, to the number of some six or seven hundred. Having got a seat and a table to oneself, a new cloth is brought, never used before, which is your own for the time and shall be no one else's; and then a waiter comes with a little tabulated list which is to be *your* bill, and scores down one penny opposite the word cloth. He comes presently with a roll, snowy and fresh as the cloth, said to be the best bread in Paris, and scores *that* down, one penny. Thus we make a beginning. Then a list of soups—julienne, spring, &c., which arrives, excellent, fragrant, appetising. It goes down, twopence half-penny. Fish —mackerel, eperlans, threepence. Fricandeau— in short, a choice from a long list, at about three pence the portion, with an excellent ordinaire at tenpence the bottle. The clatter is terrific, the rattle of knives on plates is like the mitraille of infantry, yet all round are well-dressed strangers, families, in fact of the regular café complexion. And there is not the least of that rather rough, coarse, working-man air which pervades similar attempts in our own country. Everything is good, cheap, and refined. At the end the little list is totted up by one of the smartest and brightest young girls, not one of the conventional café empresses, and we find some such result as this:

	s.	d.
Cloth	0	1
Bread	0	1
Soup	0	2½
Fish	0	3
Vegetables	0	2
Beef	0	3
Wine (½)	0	5
	1	5½

Duval has no less than twelve of these monster houses through the city, and though his profits on each article are to be reckoned only in decimals of a farthing, he is said to be making a fortune. He cultivates a variety too, in the tone of each house. Thus his establishment on the Sebastopol Boulevard, has quite a Dutch air, where quite a show of the showiest, plumpest, Dutch looking women, in the most starched and speckless frills and linen, are seen busy at work peeling and cutting vegetables. Above stairs all the "service" is conducted by these buxom ladies, who seem to be the swiftest deftest waiters in the world. Looking round on Duval and his twelve houses, and his tens of thousands of diners, it is impossible not to see that there is more than enterprise and successful cleverness here; and that it is the good sense and decorum of our neighbours that are in a great measure entitled to credit. It is the absence of false pride and foolish gentility, and it is the presence of politeness, order, and decency which only makes great schemes of this sort practicable. It is to be feared that the great ones in our country, those at least who wear newer and blacker coats than their neighbours, could not descend to such promiscuous companionship. While, if they did, it is no less to be feared, that the ill manners of the class known familiarly as "cad," would stand in the way. Such is a humiliating confession, but it is the truth, that we must educate and repress our snobs before we can trust ourselves with these great mixtures of different classes. This is the whole secret of so many French arrangements for the public, which we admire, but dare not imitate; and the secret why women of all degrees are as fairly represented in every crowd as the men. The cad and snob are present no doubt, but public opinion has its iron fingers on them.

It does seem as though we can take our ease more in our café than in our inn. Here again is a mysterious problem: our great hotel having a vast café of its own, spacious, light, glittering with white and gold, and its ceiling elaborate with fine painting. When shall we reach to this sort of decoration—this adorning of our public places with painting for the million? We sit on velvet sofas, the service is charming, the waiters bright, clean, as though all their earnings went in washing. The old fallacy of the "dirty foreigner" has long since gone to the Capulet tomb of vulgar prejudices. Yet with all this luxuriance, a draft for a single franc will be respectably "honoured" in the shape of a most delicious bowl of chocolate and cream, with attendant rolls, "breads," and butter as delicious. A workman in a blouse would perhaps hardly be tolerated, but yet humbler orders, from individuals more humble, are made welcome. There do we see also that wonderful mystery, the rusty-looking Frenchman in seedy clothes, who yet orders a breakfast of six or seven francs, taking an hour and a half over it, and reading every newspaper in the place. What in short are these eating Frenchmen who take their hour to breakfast, who sit out at the tables and smoke, and sip, who dine with similar deliberation, who go to the play, and sit again, and dress, and smoke? How do they live? Who supports them? Do they work? Do they sow or spin? It seems highly improbable; yet the thing might be worth inquiring into, for as a mode of life or profession such must be highly agreeable.

III. THE PARIS STAGE.

A Parisian lives, it may be said, in three rooms—his bedroom, his café, and his box at the theatre. Three roofs thus cover his head. Naturally, "a profession," which does so much for him, is handsomely recognised. Players are "known to the state;" its eye sees them officially, as it were, in the same way as it does the soldier. With us, they were once "his majesty's servants," and wore his majesty's uniform—scarlet and gold; but, through indifference or ill desert, that slender hold on royal favour has been relaxed and is out of date. The French theatres themselves show, by their bearing, the effect of this wholesome encouragement. They do not skulk in mean streets or show squeezed fronts, their old brick faces covered up with mean plaster; they stand out proudly and boldly, shake off all latent support, disdain to be elbowed by mean houses pressing on their shoulders. The new French play-houses are noble massive structures, lift their heads like museums and churches, and have a "Place" to themselves, with space all round. In every town in France and Germany the theatre of the place has respect; and it may be a question whether this mean and scurvy treatment of our places of amusement has not something to do with the inferior social caste of our players and their profession.

There are some few things we might copy with advantage as regards the theatres. That gathering together of all the play "posters" on one large sheet, at several fixed points, in the same type, livery, and colour, commends itself at once. Charles Lamb would have been delighted to read the eager pondering faces, wistful yet doubtful, drawn to this piece by inclination, distracted by so many other pole stars, and who are gazing at these radiant and glorified proclamations through all hours of the day. Such a coup d'œil is vastly convenient for the playgoer, and very necessary; for the theatres are not rigorous in enforcing a long run of a successful piece, and of a Sunday night a popular play is often withdrawn to make room for the re-entry of a favourite actor and another piece; so that this fatal upas, "the

run" for two hundred and three hundred nights, is not always spreading dark and blighting branches over the stage. With a bit of scenic show, one of those costly "women-pieces," where all is *decors* and dresses and procession, it is of course impossible to suspend a run, from the bands of supernumaries engaged and who are paid by the week. The sumptuous appointments, too, cannot be allowed to lie fallow or rust even for a single night, and the manager must realise as fast as he can. But in the more manageable cases, the manager wisely thinks he has another class of clients, whose interests he must consult, namely, those who have *seen* the successful play that is running; and the performance of so prodigiously successful a play as The Grande Duchesse is frequently interrupted and alternated with something less familiar. It is curious, indeed, to think of the philosophy under this influence of a "run," and that actual *success* and popularity of particular pieces should be one of the reasons that is hurrying the stage to decay. For there can be no question but that to be acting a single piece for a year or longer must dwarf the powers of the actors and give them no field for variety. Farther, too, the same system shuts out a large section of play lovers from their favourite enjoyment, since, like Mr. Swiveller, in his credit difficulties, he finds various streets and shops "blocked up" and cut off from a too fatal familiarity. In the old "palmy" days of the drama there was a delightful variety, and at Drury Lane, under Garrick's management, the playgoer could have a fresh play and a fresh set of actors at least every econd night.

The universal box-offices, of which there are some half a dozen in Paris, are another most convenient and agreeable feature in Parisian theatrical arrangements. They are not on the select and rather costly system that prevails with us, which some musicsellers and libraries turn to a means of speculation and profit. They are little halls, as it were, open to the street, into which the playgoer walks. Running round the sides are open models, three or four feet high, of every theatre in Paris. The name of every class of seat is visible, the number of every seat is marked, and the play for the night is pasted up over head. The gandin and his friend discuss the place they would like, for all purposes might be in the theatre they have chosen—select their numbers, and call over the administration to announce it. The charm of this admirable plan is, besides its convenience, that a common bourgeois can walk in and take even his two-franc pit-ticket. Every information is given, the officials of these places are posted up even in future theatrical arrangements; they are most civil and communicative. These places are open till "all hours," and it is characteristic to find the playgoers busily engaged peering into the miniature playhouses, and eagerly taking places, even at midnight.

There are things, however, about the French theatres that one would gladly see abolished; notably the three violent knocks of the mallet which causes such a thrill of delight to run through the audience. This savours of barbarism, and seems to grow more noisy every year, and is supplemented at some houses by a final disorderly thundering of the same instrument on the boards. To one accustomed to the more familiar "ting" of English houses, the effect disturbs the nerves, and coming at such a moment—always welcome—this savage prelude routs everthing dramatic. But we may suppose the French are attached to this odious relic. Again, the women box-openers—one of the few rapacious classes in the country—with their footstools and worryings about cloaks, and hats, and bills—are a serious drawback. It is surprising how the audience endures their tyranny. With the new theatres a crop of these plagues has started up ready made. But the "Figaro Programme," sold between the acts, is welcome; and the invitation to "Ask for the photographs of the artists" is more tolerable. For twopence-halfpenny to acquire the faces of all the actors on a card, with their names and characters in the piece underneath, is a not unacceptable shape of souvenir.

That the French stage is in a state of decay, like our own, there can be no question. French observers justly ascribe this in a great measure to the state of society, to which, according to to the oft-quoted sentiment, the drama does, and must, hold up the mirror. What French morals, or rather what French manners are now, for there is little change in the morals, is tolerably familiar. The mirror, therefore, must serve the taste in vogue, and reflect the "luxe" and sumptuousness, the cool draperies, and other freaks that belong to the object that holds it in its hand, or it is liable to be laid down, and not used at all. The worst symptom is the palpable change in the Palais Royal, that erst temple of broad fun, oftener retreat of absurdity, and exquisite laughter. If the air required to be cleared, and the miasmas of low spirits dispersed, we need only turn from the convenient café, into those arcades, almost cimmerian, where are the round dirty pillars, associated with a grove of walking-sticks and leather work—and flashes of hysterical laughter do the work speedily. Now, the little grotesque pieces, too impalpable almost in their fun to be put in print, but carried off so airily by the exquisite playing of Levassor and Grassot, have given place to the elaborate hilarities of the new-fangled French burlesques, long drawn out, rather forced, mixed with official music, like the Vie Parisienne. The little House is as full as ever, but the spécialité and bouquet of the place is gone. It was a school, as were once so many of the French theatres, where the artist had to study, and matriculate, and walk on, till he graduated, and find that only the beginning: a school of precious traditions, with a fashion and colour of its own which all were bound to acquire. Now the crop of new theatres springing up

with an extraordinary luxuriance, mushroom like, has created a call for actors, who are not sufficiently numerous to supply the demand. The trained soldiers, tempted by higher pay, have deserted from their old corps. They find that there is not much interest in the pieces where their real strength lies, and they have set themselves to learn a new drill. Hence the older "schools," the brave artists who have acted together so many years, knowing each other's "ways" by heart, have found new companions. Each house is fast losing, or has lost, its distinctive character.

The system of having the prompter's box in the centre of the stage, as at the opera, may have its advantages. It may, however, be open to the objection that it would make the actor less inclined to rely on his own resources, being thus secure of support in every possible way. It is characteristic, however, that it should be rendered necessary by those great spectacular pieces, where it is more requisite to *see* the prompter, his motions, and directions, than to hear the text. It might be introduced in the case of veteran actors who are not well up in their parts, as in the instance of Frederic Lemaitre, the very lees and dregs of whose acting are more precious than the choice runnings of the best existing histrionics. This wonderful genius, for all his decay, his haltings, his failing memory and powers, still left the impression on one who had never seen him before, of great and unconventional gifts, and of a round and distinct *character*, which remains present to the mind long after. With that exquisite art which is French, and French only, he had been nicely and accurately fitted with a part that suited him exactly; an old schoolmaster, gentle and pastoral, and whose whole life has been coloured by the memory of a loved wife, who died years before. This bereavement has given a gentle and childish tone to his mind; but later he discovers suddenly that she had been unfaithful to him. This shock unsettles his reason, and at the scene where he makes the discovery, and begins to wander, singing snatches of an old song, and then suddenly turning to fury, it was possible to form a perfect notion of what the old Frederic was. Further on, when his little scholars gather round him, and ask him if he did not remember them, one of our conventionals would have had his regular round of business ready—an immense deal of passing hands over the face, of tossing back his hair, of looking up at the clouds, of rolling the eye, finishing perhaps with a grin and much shaking of the head. Not so this great actor. He gave a little start as he was addressed, looked eagerly but naturally at the questioners with a puzzled air, and then said, with an indescribable half-sad, half-vexed tone, "No, dears, *I do not* know you."

In this piece was a new scenic device which may be commended heartily to the professors and mechanicians of sensation carpentry. The programme was that a gentleman was to pay a farewell visit to a lady whom he admired, at midnight, and was then to be assassinated as he came away by an outside gallery and stairs which led down into the garden. It is scarcely necessary to add that the lady was not single. The lover was, indeed, a tall man, of a vast girth round the waist, which, as he came to pay his addresses in a scarlet tightly-buttoned hunting-coat and buckskins, had an almost ludicrous effect. But, to use the French idiom, "That does not hinder"—sentiment fines down even exaggerated corpulence, and on all sides was heard, "O mon dieu, qu'il est charmant! Comme il est noble!" &c. The room in which he took this midnight farewell was semicircular, and filled the whole stage; but when he had passed out, it all began to glide away slowly to the right, the prostrate lady lying overwhelmed with grief; and then the outside front gallery, flight of stairs, and garden itself began to come into view, and the next moment, when the room had finally disappeared, the escaping lover made his appearance on the outside stairs, descended in the usual guilty fashion, and was duly shot. This striking effect produced a hurricane of applause, and was talked of everywhere as the "chambre à roulettes"—the room on casters.

LUNAR ASSISTANCE.

Suppose for a moment, that we are all transported to the bottom of the sea, there to occupy a position analogous, in respect to the waters of the ocean, to the position we hold in the lowest portion of the atmosphere. How can we form any idea of the tides that ebb and flow above us? Our only way of obtaining cognisance of the fact would be to measure the thickness of the mass of water overhead, by means of some instrument analogous to the barometer.

Let us now go up again to the surface of the earth—to the bottom of the aërial ocean which covers the whole earth. The same observations, made with the barometer, acquaint us with the existence of tides in the atmosphere. But here we have a *continuous* ocean, whose oscillations, restrained by no barrier, are not amplified by confinement in a narrow channel, as happens in the ocean of waters, through the resistance which continents oppose to their movements. We have, moreover, an ocean consisting of a fluid incomparably less dense than the waters of the sea. Taking these circumstances into consideration, we find that the periodical variations of pressure due to the tides of the atmosphere ought to occasion, in the height of the barometric column, variations amounting, at most, to the fiftieth part of an inch!

What now, of lunar influence upon the weather? Daily observations show that, in the same place, the height of the mercury in the barometer may vary by a quarter of an inch and more, without any great disturbances ensuing. If the tides in the atmosphere, caused by the moon, have any share in these variations,

it must be so very small that certainly it cannot authorise weather prophets to found their predictions upon changes of the moon.

But if the moon will not enable us to foretell rain or sunshine, she does help us to fix historical dates and to correct our ancient chronology.

In an eclipse of the sun, the moon screens the sun, either totally or in part, from certain portions of the earth's surface. Here, it is total or annular; there, it is only partial; further on, not a trace of it is witnessed. In an eclipse of the moon, on the contrary, the rays of the sun are totally or partially intercepted from the moon by the earth's interposition; and this privation of light is seen in the same way from all points of observation.

The ancients (who had nothing like so precise a knowledge as we have of the moon's movements) were unable to predict eclipses of the sun. They foretold lunar eclipses only; basing their predictions on the fact that those eclipses are reproduced almost periodically, presenting the same characters and the same intervals between each other, every eighteen years and eleven days. It therefore sufficed to have observed and registered all the eclipses of the moon happening during that period, to be able to announce with certainty the eclipses which were to occur during the period following. Now, on the contrary, with the much more exact information which we possess, not only of the moon's motions but also of the sun's, we are in a position to calculate and announce a great many years and even centuries beforehand, both the general circumstances of lunar and solar eclipses, and also all the peculiarities which the latter will present at any given spot on earth. In like manner, by a retrospective examination, we can give an account of all the circumstances accompanying ancient eclipses in this or that locality.

Eclipses of the sun are somewhat more frequent than those of the moon. But as a solar eclipse can never be visible over so large a portion of the earth's surface as a lunar eclipse, it follows that, for any one given spot, solar eclipses are least numerous. And if, instead of noting *all* solar eclipses, we only reckon those which are total, we shall find that, at the same spot, they are very far from numerous. We may even say that, for any determinate locality, total solar eclipses are veritable rarities. In Paris, for instance, only one was seen during the whole of the eighteenth century—the eclipse of 1724. In the nineteenth century there has not been, nor will there be, one. The Londoners were five hundred and seventy-five years without one total eclipse—from the year 1140 to 1715; and since 1715 they have witnessed no similar spectacle.

If history mention a total eclipse of the sun as having been observed at a given spot, without giving the precise date of the observation, that date may still be determined by the exact knowledge we now possess. Recurring to the epoch to which the phenomenon belongs, we successively pass in review the different solar eclipses which occurred during a lapse of years of such extent, that we are certain it must comprise the year in which the eclipse in question was observed. By proceeding in this way we shall generally find that, out of all those eclipses, there is only one corresponding to that recorded in history; because that one only can possibly have been total at the spot where the observation was made. We shall thus get, not merely the year, but the day and even the hour, of the observation.

Take an example. Herodotus relates (book i. § 74), "After that, the Lydians and the Medes were at war during five consecutive years. In this war the Medes frequently vanquished the Lydians; the Lydians also often beat the Medes. On one occasion they even fought by night. Now, as the war continued with equal chances on either side, in the sixth year, one day when the contending armies were engaged, it happened that, in the midst of the strife, the day was suddenly changed into night. Thales of Miletus had foretold this phenomenon to the Ionians, indicating the exact year in which it actually did take place. The Lydians and the Medes, beholding night suddenly interrupt the day, put an end to the combat, and thought only of settling the terms of peace."

The eclipse here referred to, is known as Thales's eclipse. The various authors who have mentioned it have assigned to it very different dates, from the 1st of October, 583 B.C., by Scaliger, to the 3rd of February, 626 B.C., by Volnay. Professor Airy, by proceeding as indicated above, and taking advantage of the most recent data respecting the lunar movements, has decided that this eclipse occurred on the 28th of May, 584 B.C.

Between the earth and the moon there exists one grand difference. The earth has an atmosphere; the moon has none. She has no clouds, snows, nor dews — contrary to the theories of the elder astronomers. Kepler, and Galileo, held the moon to be encompassed with a heavy and elastic atmosphere: alleging, among other proofs, that the moon sometimes disappears in a clear sky, so as not to be discoverable by the best glasses (of that day): little stars of the fifth and sixth magnitude remaining visible all the time.

Kepler says that he has observed this phenomenon twice—once in 1580, and once in 1583. Hevelius did the same in 1620. Ricciolus and other Jesuits, at Bologna, and many people throughout Holland, observed the like on the 14th of April, 1642. And yet at Venice and Vienna the moon remained, all the while, conspicuous. On December 23, 1703, there was another total obscuration of the moon, which must not be confounded with an eclipse. At Arles, in France, she first appeared of a yellowish brown; at Avignon, ruddy and transparent, as if the sun were shining through her. At Marseilles, one part was reddish, the other very dusky; "and at length, although in a clear sky, she wholly disappeared." Here it is evi-

dent, they say, that as the colours appear different at the same time, they do not belong to the moon herself, but are occasioned by an atmosphere around her, variously disposed in this and that place, for refracting these or those coloured rays.

Lord Rosse's telescope has stripped the moon of her atmosphere, leaving us still enveloped in ours; and we have only to observe what is daily passing before our eyes to understand the changes which the atmosphere has produced on the solid crust of our globe. The hollows are filled up and smoothed over by sedimentary deposits brought down by rains; the relief of our surface is gradually worn down. The moon is as a medal fresh from the mint; the earth is as a shilling which has sustained the effects of passing for years and years from pocket to pocket.

SOMETHING LEFT.

"Gone, gone, the freshness of my youthful prime;
Gone my illusions, tender or sublime;
Gone is the thought that wealth is worth its cost,
Or aught I hold so good as what I've lost;
Gone are the beauty and the nameless grace
That once I worshipp'd in dear Nature's face;
Gone is the mighty music that of yore
Swept through the woods or roll'd upon the shore;
Gone the desire of glory in men's breath,
To waft my name beyond the deeps of death;
Gone is the hope that in the darkest day
Saw bright To-morrow with empurpling ray;
Gone, gone—all gone, on which my heart was cast;
Gone, gone for ever, to the awful Past;
All gone—but Love!"
Oh, coward to repine!
Thou hast all else, if Love indeed be thine!

TELEGRAPHS UNDER GOVERNMENT.

That there is at the present moment a proposal before the House of Commons for the transference of the telegraphs in the United Kingdom from private control to the control of the State—that is to say, for the purchase by Government of the existing telegraphic lines and appliances, and the placing of them under the direction of the Post-office—is generally well known. But, although the question is one of great national importance, and one directly affecting private convenience, the bulk of the public know nothing of the details of this scheme, nothing of the advantages proposed to be placed at the public disposal, nothing of the comparatively degraded position, telegraphically speaking, which the British public holds in regard to other European publics, and from which it will—should the proposal become law—be emancipated. We, therefore, purpose briefly to recount the details of a scheme which, in future times, may rank next to the penny postage.

In the first place, let us see what the Post-office proposes to do for the public if the telegraphic system of the United Kingdom be placed under its control. It proposes: To open a central telegraphic office at each of the ten district post-offices in London. To open subordinate telegraph offices at the sorting offices and receiving offices in each district. To connect the subordinate telegraphic offices of each district with the central telegraphic office of that district. To establish direct communication between each central telegraphic office, and each other central telegraphic office in London. To establish central telegraphic offices at the post-offices of the principal towns in the kingdom, and to establish direct communication between all such central telegraphic offices and the central telegraphic office in the east central district of London. To establish direct communication between the more important of the central telegraphic offices in the provinces, and the central telegraphic offices in the west central, western, and south-western, districts of London. To establish a direct communication between each central telegraphic office in the provinces, and such of the other central telegraphic offices in the provinces as it may be desirable to connect with it. To open subordinate telegraphic offices at the district offices, sorting offices, and certain of the receiving offices in Liverpool, and to connect them with the central office in Liverpool; in like manner to open subordinate telegraphic offices at the principal receiving offices in such towns as Edinburgh, Dublin, Manchester, Glasgow, Leeds, Bristol, Sheffield, Bradford, and to connect each group of such subordinate offices with its central telegraphic office. To open in the first instance subordinate offices, connected in like manner with central offices, at the money-order offices of all places having a population of two thousand persons and upwards. To open deposit offices, that is, offices at which messages may be deposited, and the charge thereon paid, at every post-office in the United Kingdom at which no telegraphic office is established. To permit the pillar-boxes throughout the kingdom to be places of deposit for messages, provided such messages be written on stamped paper. To require payment for messages to be made in stamps, or by writing them on stamped paper, and to issue special stamps for that purpose. To make the charge for transmission from any one part to any other part of the United Kingdom, uniformly and without regard to distance, one shilling for the first twenty words, with an addition of sixpence for every addition of ten words or part of ten words: such charge to include free delivery by special messenger at any place within the town delivery of the terminal office, when that office is a head post-office; and within one mile of the terminal office when that office is not a head post-office; and to include free transmission by post from a deposit office to the nearest telegraphic office, when the message is so left for transmission, or free delivery by post when the addressee resides out of the limits of the terminal office, and the sender does not desire to pay for a special messenger. To fix the rate for conveyance by special mes-

senger beyond the limits of the free delivery, at sixpence per double mile. To make arrangements, on the plan of those prevailing in Belgium and Switzerland, for the registration and redirection of telegrams, and for the delivery of copies. To give facilities for the transmission of money orders by telegraph, on payment of the charge for the message, and of a commission which shall not be less than two ordinary commissions, and under certain restrictions as to the amount to be remitted by any one person.

That these proposals offer enormous advantages to the public, as they appear on paper, is at once evident. The remaining question is, can they be carried out? The proposers answer at once in the affirmative, adding that there is nothing novel in the scheme thus described, and that each one of its parts has been tried successfully. The amalgamation of the telegraphic and postal administration has been tried with perfect success in Belgium and in Switzerland, and also in the British colonies of Victoria and New South Wales. The proposed distribution of the system is analogous to that which prevails in France. Uniformity of charge, irrespective of distance, and with a lower tariff than that which is recommended *in the first instance* for the United Kingdom, has been tried with the best results in Belgium and in Switzerland. The institution of places of deposit for messages, in addition to the offices of transmission, and the gratuitous grant of postal facilities under certain conditions to the senders of telegraphic messages, is borrowed from Belgium. Telegraph stamps are in use in Belgium and in France. The exclusion of the addresses from the number of words to be paid for, is borrowed from Victoria and New South Wales. A telegraphic money-order office has for some years existed in Switzerland and in Prussia. The result is, not merely that the business is more cheaply conducted, but that greater advantages are given to the public on the Continent, than in the United Kingdom. Not only are the telegraph offices more numerous in proportion to the population, but they are brought closer to the population, and carried more freely into the little towns and sparsely populated districts. After making due deduction for those cases in which a place is served by two or three telegraph companies, where the service of one company would suffice, it appears that in the United Kingdom there is one telegraph office to every eighteen thousand persons: whilst in France there is one to every fourteen thousand persons, in Belgium one to every twelve thousand persons, and in Switzerland one to every seven thousand persons.

There are many other advantages. Under the arrangements proposed, the senders and the addressees of telegraphic messages would respectively be nearer than they now are to the despatching and receiving telegraphic offices: so that the difficulty of sending a message would be reduced, while the rapidity of its transmission would be increased. The proportion of addressees resident within the limits of the receiving telegraphic offices; would be greater than it is at present; and consequently the extra charge for the conveyance of a message beyond those limits would be imposed less frequently then than now. The period during which telegraphic offices are open daily for transmission of messages, would in many cases be considerably extended. But perhaps the greatest boon of all, especially for persons resident in the rural districts, would be the combination of postal and telegraphic facilities—at present impossible, but a leading feature of the new scheme. The telegraphic offices under the control of the Post-office would be much closer to the bulk of the population than the existing telegraphic offices; but the residents in rural districts would still in many cases be at a considerable though a diminished distance from the nearest telegraphic office. If these residents in rural districts were desirous of transmitting their messages to the nearest telegraphic office with the greatest possible speed, they might either despatch them by their own messenger or procure an official messenger, by payment of an extra charge, at the nearest deposit office. But if they were not very much pressed for time, and were content to accept service by letter-carrier, in lieu of service by special messenger, they might, by posting their messages in the nearest pillar-box or deposit office, ensure their transmission, free of extra charge, to the nearest telegraphic office at the usual time of clearing that pillar-box or deposit office. Thus, for instance; residents in Lampeter desiring to send telegrams to London through Carmarthen (which, though twenty-four miles distant from them, is their nearest telegraphic station), would know that if they wrote their messages on stamped paper and deposited them at the Lampeter post-office by 1.15 P.M., the messages would go forward at that hour free of extra charge, and would reach Carmarthen for immediate despatch by telegraph at 4.25 P.M. Thus, also; messages might be posted at Fort Augustus up to 11.40 P.M. for transmission over a distance of thirty-five miles to Inverness, the nearest telegraph office, where they would arrive for immediate despatch by telegraph, at 9.20 A.M.

It will be obvious to all who study these illustrations, that in an immense number of cases a service partly postal and partly telegraphic would meet all the requirements of the senders, while it would be much cheaper (the whole cost being covered by the charge for the telegram) than a service partly by special messenger and partly by telegraph. And it will be equally obvious that this partly postal and partly telegraphic service would in a vast number of cases serve as well for the reply to the message as for the message itself. For the transmission of a letter and the reply thereto between Lampeter and London, forty-four hours are required; but for the transmission of a message and the reply thereto between the same places, on the partly postal and partly telegraphic system, only

twenty hours would be required. So again; the course of communication between Fort Augustus and London would be shortened by a period of from two days to two days and a half.

The foregoing illustrations (which might be varied and multiplied indefinitely), will serve to show how constantly, if the scheme proposed were in operation, the public would be enabled, by a combination of postal and telegraphic facilities, to obtain a most important acceleration of their correspondence, at a cheap rate. The occasions would be numberless in which, though they might not be willing to undertake the labour or expense of going or sending to a telegraphic office, or to incur the cost of transmission at the existing rates—and perhaps, the cost of delivery beyond the limits of the terminal office—they would be very willing to expend a shilling, if, by so doing, and by depositing a message in a pillar-box within an easy distance, they could ensure the delivery of the message free of further charge, within from three to five hours after the date of despatch.

To those, however, who desire, not merely a partial use of telegraphic facilities for the purpose of a partial acceleration of their correspondence, but the enjoyment of the fullest facilities which the telegraph can afford, the system would unquestionably afford advantages much greater than any in the power of telegraph companies to give. Without great outlay, the existing companies could not bring the telegraphic offices, as a rule, closer to the population than they are at present; nor, without great outlay, could they extend the hours during which the majority of those offices are open for business. The Post-office has already the means of bringing the telegraphic offices closer to the population and of extending their hours of business.

We are a prudent people, and we like full value for our money. There is little doubt that first among the circumstances which have retarded the growth of telegraphic correspondence in the United Kingdom, is the fact that the charges for the transmission of messages are, and have been for some time, higher with us than on the Continent. France, Prussia, Belgium, Switzerland, has each a tariff, the two former less, the two latter very much less, than ours. The following Table will illustrate this part of the subject:

Country.	Greatest Distance over which a Message can be Transmitted.	Charge for a Message of 20 Words over greatest Distance.	Corresponding Charges in Great Britain for a like Distance.
		s. d.	s. d.
France . .	About 600 miles	1 8	2 0
Prussia . .	„ 500 „	1 6	2 0
Belgium . .	„ 160 „	0 5	1 6
Switzerland .	„ 200 „	0 5	1 6

The States of the Continent have great advantage over the United Kingdom in this respect. They can afford to impose low charges for the transmission of messages, because they need not do more than make the telegraphs self-supporting. Because the telegraphic system of each State is under a single management, thereby avoiding loss of revenue and increase of cost caused by competition. And because they for the most part save expense, *by combining the telegraphic administration with the administration of several other state departments.*

Of course this scheme, beneficial as we believe it to be, has not been received with universal satisfaction. So the establishment of railways and the introduction of the cheap postage were both derided by The Quarterly Review and other authorities. The objections raised against the proposed plan are of various kinds, and come from various quarters. One of the chief of them, is, that the adoption of the proposed scheme would place too much power in the hands of the Government, which, on emergency—as, for instance, at a general election—might be tempted to use the information they could obtain through it, to the detriment of their political adversaries. The answer to this is, plainly, that public opinion would declare itself so strongly, both in the press and in parliament, against any such conduct, if it ever occurred, as effectually to prevent its recurrence. This point is touched upon by Mr. John Lewis Ricardo, M.P., then both a member of the legislature and the chairman of the largest telegraph company in the kingdom, in a pamphlet published in 1861. The following quotation will show that he had no apprehension:

> To secure the honour and reputation of the British Government as a guarantee for the privacy of communications, necessarily more confidential than those conveyed under sealed envelope through the post; to establish a conviction that the public are dependent, not upon the discretion of individuals, but upon the faith of a ministry responsible at any moment to a vigilant parliament, that there shall be no undue preference or precedence given even to the highest financial or most powerful influence in the land; in fine to substitute the safeguard of statesmen chosen by the nation for their talent and integrity, for that of men of business, however high their character, elected by a body of shareholders, simply to pay them the highest amount of interest obtainable from the tolls levied upon the public; to retain the telegraphic despatches of the various departments charged with the maintenance of the honour, and interests, and tranquillity of the country inviolate and inviolable, instead of being passed through the hands of a joint-stock company, are advantages which no man can deny, and which parliament and the people will not fail to appreciate.

Of course, it has been said that the scheme is an interference with private enterprise. The reply is, that the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce in 1865 appointed a Committee to enquire into the subject, and that the report of that committee—adopted at a meeting held under the presidency of Mr. McLaren, M.P.—strongly

recommended the assumption by Government of the control of telegraphic communication, and declared that the obstacles in the way were "comparatively few and unimportant." And the result of the action taken by the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce was, that all the Chambers of Commerce in the kingdom petitioned parliament in favour of the proposal; a deputation from them waited on the chancellor of the exchequer and the postmaster-general; and the Chambers have repeatedly, at their public meetings, renewed their request for the introduction of the measure. Nor are the Chambers of Commerce alone in this matter. Petitions in favour of the scheme have been addressed to parliament by the medical profession, which is largely interested in the extension of telegraphic intercourse, and by the press, to which promptitude and excellence in telegraphy is of the utmost importance, and which, as a rule, complains bitterly of the manner in which this service is now performed.

Again, it has been objected that the passing of the proposed bill will enable the Government to go through that terrific process known as "putting on the screw" in regard to the existing companies and their shareholders. This is not the case. The bill is only a permissive one. It only gives power to sell, and forces no one to sell, though it gives the shareholders power to force the Government to buy. If the Government should not offer acceptable terms, the bargain can be referred to arbitration. It is said, with apparent truth, that the Government might buy up a poor company whose shares are at a discount, and by working that company at the uniform one shilling rate, might unfairly compete with the other companies, and so force them to sell against their will; but in answer to this, it must be borne in mind that there is nothing in the world but public opinion to prevent the Government from doing this *now*. It has now a perfect right to offer to the public to transmit its letters by telegraph, and it will do no more when it has bought up all the companies. The postal system, must and will, in the march of events, inevitably adopt the telegraph, or the postal system will itself be left behind, and a vast telegraph post will be forced (by the wants of the community) into existence, to compete with the Post-office itself. The growth of telegraphic business proves this; greater growth will, as heretofore, involve further reductions in cost, until, in course of progress and expansion, the price will become so low as to take away half the business of the Post-office. It being inevitable, therefore, that the Post-office, to exist, must engraft the telegraph on its system, it follows that if the shareholders should be strong enough to refuse altogether to give it the option of buying now by agreement, they might hereafter either get Government as a competitor, or be forced to sell whether or no, and possibly at a reduced price.

The objections we have endeavoured to answer, have been made anonymously, chiefly in pamphlet form. Very recently, however, a pamphlet has been put forth, with the signature, affixed "by order of the Board," of "Robert Grimston," chairman of the Electric and International Telegraph Company. Mr. Grimston will be remembered by middle-aged cricketers, as one of the ornaments of "Lord's" in bygone years, and is justly esteemed by all Harrovians for the admirable manner in which to the present day he "coaches" the Harrow eleven for the school-matches; but the patience and discrimination which distinguish Mr. Grimston in the playing-field, seem to desert him in the study; while, in his literary style, he inclines to a system of "swiping" which is now obsolete alike in cricket and pamphleteering. It is, perhaps, rather hard on Mr. Grimston to judge him as a business man, inasmuch as on page 8 of his own pamphlet he represents himself as replying to a question from the Chancellor of the Exchequer as to whether, since the proposal of Government to acquire the telegraphs, the shares had not risen considerably in the market, "I never take any notice of the price of shares"—to say the least of it, a charmingly frank declaration on the part of the chairman of a great company. But there are two or three points in Mr. Grimston's pamphlet which it is desirable to answer. Taking the Government proposition to establish telegraphic stations at every money-order office, he says: "Now let us test the argument by this very case. In the last report laid before parliament by the Postmaster General, an account was given of the number of money-order offices established in certain large towns, and of the amount of the money orders issued in the years 1864 and 1865. What do we find? Liverpool, in 1864, had twenty-six money-order offices, and issued money orders to the extent of five hundred and fifty-one thousand nine hundred and forty pounds. In 1865, the number of money-order offices in Liverpool was increased no less than fifty per cent, namely, from twenty-six to thirty-nine, but the increase of the money-order business was less than two per cent!" Mr. Grimston apparently does not see that the obvious answer to this, is, that the Post-office gave an enormous amount of accommodation, and lost nothing by it! In reference to a proposal for a new clause "to enable the Postmaster General to enter into contracts with the proprietors of newspapers for the transmission of intelligence sent by telegraph," Mr. Grimston says: "The proprietors of newspapers are not easily to be caught by chaff, and they might probably prefer a clause which would limit the Post-office to the existing 'unquestionably low rates,' and preclude its entering into contracts more advantageous to one newspaper than to another." Mr. Grimston will probably learn with surprise that this clause was drawn up by certain "proprietors of newspapers," and was presented by them in deputation. One more point, and we have done with Mr. Grimston. He says: "The Post-office sets up 'Money-order Offices' in connexion with this

scheme. Your grace probably is unaware that an enormous money-order business is carried on by the telegraph offices. Thousands upon thousands of pounds a day are remitted by telegraph—the amounts being received at one end of the line and paid at the other. This business, though it makes no show, is, in the aggregate, far larger than the petty business of the money-order offices connected with your grace's department, the practice of which is universally complained of as so cumbrous and costly. Does the Government propose to carry on this business? If so, on what terms? At present the Post-office orders are limited to five pounds. The telegraphic companies place no limits on the amounts they receive and pay." Now, put by the side of this wonderful evidence of the wonderful Chairman of the wonderful Company who are quite satisfied (no doubt) of his never taking any notice of the price of its shares, the following slight facts: The "petty business" of the Money-order Office amounts to seventeen millions sterling per annum. Money-orders for ten pounds can be obtained at all money-order offices, and the Post-office places no limit to the number of these orders issued to one person!

To the objections that State control would be injurious to invention, or that the transmission of news by government officials would act injuriously to the public interest, we have not replied, because to us they seem too childish and trivial to need reply. We believe that the condition of things in which the State was regarded as a bugbear, is over for ever, and that as has been justly said by one of the most liberal and thoughtful of our contemporaries:* "The old dread of the State is decaying, as men become convinced that the state is but themselves well organised; and we do not despair yet of seeing the counter theory, that 'no monopoly can be worked for the national benefit except through the nation,' openly acknowledged by English statesmen; and the further proposition, that 'the weakness of individuals ought to be supplemented by the strength of all,' receive, what it has never had yet, a fair discussion."

Thoroughly agreeing in these views, and believing the proposed scheme to be one of very great national importance, we earnestly commend its adoption to the House of Commons.

TOWN AND COUNTRY SPARROWS.

Whatever the fair Lesbia may have done in the days of Horace and Macænas, nobody in our time makes a household pet or a bosom friend of the sparrow. Nor has he much to recommend him to affection or familiarity. He is not beautiful, like the canary; he cannot sing, like the lark or the nightingale; but only chirp and twitter in a manner that is not particularly agreeable; and, unlike the duck, the goose, the barn-door fowl, or the ortolan, he has no attraction for the disciples of Brillat Savarin, and would be scorned as food by the hungriest of human beings, even by the hippophagists. But, notwithstanding all these deficiencies, I like the sparrow. He is brave and lively in his behaviour to the outer world, and very affectionate to his mate and little ones in domestic life. He, moreover, plays his allotted part in the beneficent scheme of nature, as much as man does at one end of the great chain and the animalcule at the other.

There are, according to the great French Naturalist, Buffon, who somewhat angrily calls the sparrow an "idle glutton;" no less than sixty-seven varieties of this well-known bird. The best known of the sixty-seven—all of them inhabitants of the old or Eastern hemisphere, and none of them known except by name in the Western world—are the house sparrow, the tree sparrow, and the hedge sparrow; to which I think should be added the London sparrow. Unlike the swallow, the cuckoo, and other migratory birds, the sparrow does not seek a perpetual spring or summer, by travel to the sunny south, but stays with us in all seasons. The severest winter does not drive him away, though it may sometimes kill him or force him to desperate straits for a subsistence. All the year round he twitters in town and country, and picks up a livelihood as best he can; and all the year round he multiplies his kind. The hen produces three broods in the twelvemonth. Next to his fondness for human neighbourhood—for the sparrow is never found in the wilderness or in dense forests, but always within easy flight of the cottager's chimney or the smoke of city houses—his great characteristics are amativeness and combativeness—cause and effect. When he has fixed his affections on the charmer of his heart, and any other sparrow presumes even so much as to look at her, or to utter one loving chirp to distract her attention, woe betide the interloper, unless he be a much stronger and fiercer bird than his antagonist. War is declared immediately, and a combat ensues, in which, as among men, the prize falls to the possession of the victor. "None but the brave deserve the fair," is a maxim apparently as well understood among sparrows as it used to be among the preux chevaliers or knights errant of the olden time, In his domestic life, as far as man can judge of him by external appearances, the sparrow is happy. He and his mate are fond of home, and if any one wickedly destroys their nest they indulge in no vain repining, but immediately set about building another; not like the waggoner in the fable, asking Jupiter to help them in their distress, but helping themselves, as all good birds, and all good people, ought to do. And if a mischievous farm boy steals her eggs, Mrs. Sparrow, instead of weeping disconsolately over her loss, for more than a very brief period of natural disappointment, proceeds forthwith to fill up the void thus created in her domestic circle by the production

* The Spectator, November 23, 1867.

of just as many additional eggs as have been taken from her.

Having a liking for the sparrow, I allure him to my garden plat by daily feasts of bread-crumbs and chopped fat. One sparrow seems to tell another of the good fortune thus awaiting the birds; and the first comer, who, in nine cases out of ten, is a sparrow, no sooner flies away to the tree or hedge, or house-top which he inhabits, with a crust or crumb about the size of his head, than down come from all points of the compass a dozen or two of his friends or acquaintances. Sometimes a mutton or a fish bone that my dog has done with is thrown among the crumbs, and the sparrow, not at all particular about his diet, proceeds to pick it, and, if it be a marrow bone, to put his bill into it in search of the choice morsels which the dog's teeth and tongue have been unable to reach. The female sparrow brings her young ones to these symposia as soon as they are able to fly, and stuffs the large pieces of bread or fat down their gaping throats with true maternal devotion. It cannot be said that she feeds her "little ones," for what, considering their age, ought to be her little ones, are, in point of fact, her "large" ones. We have but to fancy Mrs. Smith or Mrs. Jones, or any other fair lady of our own acquaintance, who had been married a twelvemonth, and had a baby to feed as big as herself and her husband rolled into one, to realise the comparative size of the sparrow's progeny and the mother's thoughtful care in nursing, tending, and providing for such monsters. Not that the size of the young sparrow represents flesh and blood. On the contrary, it represents little but fluff and feathers. As the young bird grows old its size diminishes. The feast that attracts the sparrows attracts other varieties of birds—the chaffinch, the bullfinch, the goldfinch, the blackbird, the thrush, the starling, and the robin redbreast. None of these associate with the sparrow, but watch their chance of hopping in for something when the vulgar little birds have flown away with prizes in their bills. The robin especially seems to dislike and avoid the sparrow, and will no more rub shoulders with him than a gentleman will hob-and-nob or shake hands with a chimney-sweep. The blackbirds and thrushes—thrice as large as sparrows—will on no account eat with them, but, like the robin, take the opportunity of the sparrow's absence to claim a share of any of the good things that may be going. Is it because, as the nursery rhyme says, "the sparrow killed cock robin with his bow and arrow," in some far-distant period of antiquity, that to this day the robin refuses so pertinaciously to have anything to do with his traditionary foe? or does the robin consider himself an aristocrat and the sparrow a rough? Whatever the reason may be, no sparrow is admissible into the robin's society, or into that, as far as my observations extend, of any other bird whatever. Another difference of character between the robin and the sparrow deserves a word of notice. However often you may feed the sparrow, and however well he may in consequence become acquainted with you, he is not to be induced to enter the house. The robin, on the contrary, after a little while, will hop in at the open window or door, and trust to your generosity and sense of honour not to molest or try to capture him. The sparrow, besides being distrustful, seems to be a pariah among the feathered race, the lowest of the low, the vulgarest of the vulgar, the slightest contact with whom is as contaminating as greased cartridges to a Sepoy. The sparrow, however, does not seem to take to heart the dislike with which he is regarded; and if other birds are to dine off the crumbs that my hand distributes, he takes especial care that he shall dine first, or, at all events, have the first pickings. He is not afraid of any of them, however large, and, in fact, does not seem to be afraid of anything but a man, a woman, a dog, or a cat. Once I noticed a rat venture, just as the sparrows had left the coast clear for a minute, to run off with a small piece of bread. Half a dozen sparrows immediately flew down from a tree, and chased him with vociferous twitterings, till he disappeared into his hole—not, however, discomfited, for he got clear off with his prize.

Though I feed the sparrows all the winter, they do not spare my garden in the spring and summer on that account. My gardener holds that I do mischief by my ill-judged kindness, and that I attract to the grounds a hundred sparrows for every one that would otherwise frequent them. However this may be, I know that they have not the smallest amount of gratitude, but, like human sinners, do those things which they ought not to do, and eat those things which I would much rather they let alone. They dig up with their bills the seed newly sown in the ground, especially the carrots, the turnips, the spinach, the parsnips, and the lettuces. Whether they watch with their sharp little eyes from some neighbouring tree the process of sowing the seed, and know where to go to in the gardener's absence, or whether, as the gardener says, they smell the seed in the ground, I am unable to say. I only know that they were very destructive in this respect till I employed a method to punish or prevent their depredations. The sparrow has very tender feet, and does not like to have them pricked or stung, either by pulverised glass, or by what is better for the purpose, the common prickly furze chopped small and strewed over the ground. Thus, whenever I sow seed which is in danger from the sparrows, I strew chopped furze over the place; and the sparrow after one trial at robbery gives over the attempt, and transfers his attentions to some one with less experience of his tricks than I have acquired. The sparrow is particularly fond of the first tender buds of gooseberry and currant bushes, which in the early spring he sometimes strip bare of their nascent leaves. He is also very partial to the young lettuces when they first appear above the ground, and as for peas, strawberries, cherries,

red and white currants, he is, as Buffon says, a veritable, though by no means an idle, glutton. Not being a farmer I cannot state from experience the damage he does to the ripening corn; but the French naturalist calculated that it would require twenty pounds of grain to keep a pair of sparrows for a year. This calculation presupposes that the birds should be kept in captivity, and fed with nothing else but corn; whereas the sparrow in his wild state is as omnivorous as man, and neither disdains fish, flesh, nor fowl, that has undergone the process of cooking; to say nothing of the living prey in the shape of worms, slugs, caterpillars, flies, moths, and butterflies, which when he can get them he is glad to make a meal of for himself, or distribute among his young ones. The farmers, as most people know, have a great objection to sparrows. In some parts of the country they enrol themselves into sparrow-clubs, for the purpose of exterminating these busy depredators, and in most parts of the country they employ small boys or young lads in the corn-fields to frighten them away, either by shouts or cries, or by the more effectual discharge of firearms. But the farmers are wrong in this matter; and the sparrow, thief though he be, is their benefactor.

Honest old Bewick, of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, an excellent naturalist as well as an artist, says upon this subject:

"Most of the smaller birds are supported, especially when young, by a profusion of caterpillars, small worms, and insects; on these they feed, and thus they contribute to preserve the vegetable world from destruction. This is contrary to the commonly received opinion that birds, particularly *sparrows,* do much mischief in destroying the labours of the gardener and husbandman. It has been observed 'that a *single pair of sparrows,* during the time they are feeding their young, will destroy about *four thousand caterpillars weekly!*' They likewise feed their young with butterflies and other winged insects, each of which, if not destroyed in this manner, would be productive of several hundreds of caterpillars. Let us not condemn a whole species of animals because, in some instances, we have found them troublesome or inconvenient. Of this we are sufficiently sensible, but the uses to which they are subservient in the grand economical distribution of nature, we cannot so easily ascertain. We have already observed that, in the destruction of caterpillars, sparrows are eminently serviceable to vegetation, and in this respect alone, there is reason to suppose, sufficiently repay the destruction they make in the produce of the garden and the field."

In the United States of America and Canada, where there are no sparrows—and where few small birds can live unless in the wilderness—partly from the fact that every small boy from the age of eleven upwards is allowed to carry a gun, and blaze away at everything with wings, bigger than a butterfly or a humming bird, that comes within range of his weapon, the plague of caterpillars, especially of that known as the "measure worm" is beyond conception to the dwellers in our more fortunate isles. In the hot summers—and it should be remembered that even the Northern States of America, enjoy (or suffer from) a climate similar to that of Spain or Morocco—the shade of trees is especially agreeable, and in the principal streets of the principal cities, the oleanthus, the elm, the maple and other trees are planted, both for their beauty and their utility. Unluckily the "measure worm," a vile, disgusting, black caterpillar, that breeds in incredible numbers, loves the trees also, and the early leaves no sooner expand than the "measurer" begins to disport himself by dangling from the boughs. It has often been proposed as a remedy for this filthy nuisance to introduce the European sparrow to prey upon the grubs. When the subject was lately mooted for the hundredth time, the leading journal of New York undertook to prove, that even if the sparrow could be acclimatised—which the writer seriously doubted—the cats of New York would prove too many for it and very speedily extirpate the foreign intruder. As, however, there are quite as many cats in London as in New York—perhaps ten times as many—and the sparrow still lives and thrives in our great city, in spite of an occasional meal made upon him by our hungry grimalkins, the argument of the New York editor was not founded upon a complete appreciation of the facts. The experiment was, and is, well worth the trying, as it is possible that the mania for killing such birds which besets the small boys of America, may be far more to blame than the murderous propensities of the cat, for the failure that has hitherto attended all the efforts made to introduce the sparrow to the house-roofs of our transatlantic cousins.* This seems the more probable, as an attempt to naturalise the sparrow in Australia has succeeded to the fullest degree. Mr. Edward Wilson consigned a large number of healthy birds to Melbourne. They were let loose immediately on arrival, and betook themselves to the tiles and the tree-tops; and, possibly because the little Australian boys have not yet been entrusted with firearms, or because the grimalkins—like themselves, a recent immigration to the antipodes—looked with as little concern upon sparrows in the new country as they did in the old, they speedily began to pair, and breed, and make themselves at home. So greatly have they flourished—it is to be hoped at the expense in the first instance of the gnats and the caterpillars—that the gardeners in the neighbourhood of Melbourne have begun to complain, just as gardeners and farmers foolishly do at home, of their depredations upon the peas and cherries.

The London sparrow, like other created

* These efforts are still in progress, and thousands of sparrows were let loose in the city of New York this last spring. To protect the birds against the severity of the winter, they are provided with little wooden houses, comically perched among the branches of the trees.

things, takes something of his colour from his habitat, and is a brown, dingy, dirty, smoky-hued featherling, compared with the country sparrow, in whose plumage white, and grey, and pure black, mingle harmoniously with the russet brown, which is the predominant colour of his livery. He has to make as hard a fight for his living as the "city Arab." There are no corn-fields to pillage, no orchards to rob, no succulent green peas or juicy cherries to be got. There is nothing for him but the refuse of men and animals; flies, spiders, earwigs, and all the vermin that haunt the crannies of old brickwork, or imbed themselves in the interstices of the slates and tiles. In the country he has human enemies, and a good many of them; in the town his only enemy is the cat. There is, it is true, a tradition that some poor Polish and other political refugees from the wars, revolutions, and intrigues of Continental Europe, who inhabit the foreign settlements around Leicester-square, are in the habit of setting traps and springes for the sparrows at the windows of their squalid attics, and eating them, in default sometimes of any other kind of food; but if this be the case, it is exceptional, and can make but slight inroad upon the security of almost the only small bird that lives in a state of nature and wild freedom in the metropolis. Among the Londoners the sparrow is rather a favourite than otherwise, and many a fair hand of child or woman in many a poor locality strews bread-crumbs on some humble balcony to attract the little dusky chirper to the window. The sparrows soon discover the places where such treats are provided, and learn to come regularly for their dinner or breakfast, if punctuality be one of the gifts of the donor.

Nature, all wise and beneficent, provided a means for keeping down the exuberant propagation of the sparrow, as of every other kind of life. The means were hawks, falcons, owls, and other birds of prey. Man, however, if he have not wholly, has almost extirpated these birds in England; and as a consequence, the sparrow has increased beyond due bounds. And if the farmers, for self-protection, do no more than thin the numbers of the sparrow at certain seasons of the year, without waging a war of annihilation against him, they will do no more than supply the place in the wise economy of nature, which would have been filled by the carnivorous birds, which sportsmen—real or pretended—have not allowed to find a home in our hills and valleys. The herring as we all know is a very excellent fish; but it is so prolific that a single pair produces in one season a progeny to be numbered by hundreds of thousands. If there were no check to its increase in the shape, not alone of the fishermen, but of the whales and other fish that devour them by myriads, the deep sea itself would in the course of a score or two of years, become as thick as barley broth, with this one form of life to the exclusion of others. So of the sparrow. He is an excellent bird in his way, and earns the grain that he consumes by his services in the destruction of insects which are much greater enemies to the crop than he is. It is only when he becomes too many for the work to be done that the thinning of his number becomes justifiable.

POLLY'S ONE OFFER.

IN SIX CHAPTERS. CHAPTER III.

Bob was quite *that* sort of person. He had taken a fancy to Polly—everybody in the house had taken a fancy to Polly; but, with the exception of Mrs. Livingstone, no one treated her with the respect that was her due. She seemed made for kisses, caresses, teasing, and spoiling, and petting—for anything but grave airs and work. Of course, Polly did not see herself in the light of a good joke, very far from it, and yet she was happy in the atmosphere of kindly sarcasm that surrounded her. They were all so good to her, so easy and pleasant, and Bob and his mother especially. Mrs. Livingstone drew her on to talk of herself, and approved of what she heard of the principles and practical sense of the young creature.

"Yes, I know I am pretty, but children will like me all the better for it, so I am glad," said she, in reply to some comment on her beauty. "Miss Mill, an old governess near us, thought I might wear spectacles, but the occulist said if I did not require them they would permanently injure my eyes, and I was not going to suffer that. I did alter my hair and cut a lot off, which rather went to my heart, but it will take less time to do, and people who only see me with it plain will never know how much nicer I look in curls. And, besides, I don't think anybody calls me pretty except those who are fond of me. And, after all, I can't help it, and I am not inclined to starve or be a burden on Jane because of my face. I dare say it will prove quite as serviceable a face as if it began by being ugly—governesses age so fast; Jane has some white hairs already."

"But you may marry, dear. Don't you ever dream of a husband and children and house of your own? My girls do, and it is most natural," said Mrs. Livingstone.

"My mother does not approve of marrying," said Polly, calmly. "I used to think I should like it, but since I have heard how much there is to be borne from men, and what trouble in the bringing up of children, I am sure I shall be better out of it, and I have turned my mind to other things. Jane had an offer once, but my mother would not consent; and she has given up caring. We shall teach as long as we can, and when we have saved up money enough we shall live together and be two old maids. All my ambition now is to be a good governess."

"I wish you'd come and be mine, Polly," said Bob, who, entering as she spoke, had caught the last words. "You have no notion what a good boy I should be under wise and judicious guidance, though I am nothing to boast of under present misrule. The fact is, they don't

know how to manage me. Say yes, Polly." But Polly only laughed at his air of meek entreaty, and his mother told him Polly had not courage to undertake such a rough handful as he was, and he must apply elsewhere.

That evening Polly played on the piano, and sang distractingly. There was no end of her accomplishments. Bob listened till he loved her, till he longed to do as Maggie did, and hug her up and kiss her for pure kindness and pity that she was destined ever to be anything but a pet and darling. That was the state of mind into which she threw many people, while she herself was feeling all the time quite strong and capable and equal to her fortunes.

In this way the week went on. It was fine weather, but Bob contrived to be much more than usual about the house. He was even troublesome occasionally, as one morning, for instance, when there were custards to make, and it was Maggie's turn in the kitchen. Maggie would have Polly with her, and just when she was standing at the end of the long white table inquiring where she should sit to see, and yet not be in anybody's way, Bob appeared, lifted her up, and set her on the table. "Sit there," said he, and then took a small corner for himself close by, and supported his long length with one foot on the floor and one arm round Polly's waist. Such a thing had never happened to Polly before as to be made a prop of, and she felt that it was excruciatingly wrong for a governess (oh, if her mother or Miss Mill could see her!); but, at the same time, the very novelty of the circumstance made it difficult to extricate herself without compromising her dignity. She pretended not to be aware of the arm, though she was blushing and palpitating all over, and looking at the floor ever so far below her feet, she said, "Let me get down, please."

"You are quite safe; you can't fall while I am here," replied Bob, purposely misunderstanding her.

"But I don't like it; I am not used to it," persisted Polly, vexed and ashamed of herself, she hardly knew why.

"Like it!" echoed Bob, in a voice of tender concern. "Like what?"

Polly turned her face and looked at him with sudden tears in her eyes. He would have liked to say or do something rash, but he only took his arm away and moved off to the hearth. It was impossible to withstand that touching appeal, which said plainly, "You are my host, and should protect me, not offend me." Polly gazed out of the window for several minutes after, but he saw the burning rose on her face and one tear splashed down on her hand. Maggie seemed not to notice this byplay, and went singing to the dairy, upon which Bob drew hastily near to Polly and begged her not to be angry. "I would not vex you for the world," pleaded he. "Say you forgive me." Polly did not say anything distinctly, but he understood that his peace was made; and when he heard Maggie coming back he took his departure. "And a good riddance too," observed Maggie: "the custards would certainly have been ruined if he had stayed."

In the evening Polly sang again, and Bob, who had quite recovered his native audacity, proclaimed that he would have a singing wife or none. Why did not his sisters sing? They could do nothing. Polly could do everything.

"Yes, Polly's a clever little midge," said Maggie, tenderly enfolding her; "but you need not take the trouble to set your cap at her, Bob; for she has made up her mind already; she is going to be an old maid."

Bob laughed aloud, and seemed immensely tickled in his imagination. "She looks like it, very much like it indeed!" said he. "I should think so! Polly an old maid! That would be a sin and a shame!"

Polly blushed, and said, curtly, she wished they would talk sense, and let her alone. What business was it of Bob's, or Maggie's either, for that matter, what she was? As a governess and a working woman, of course she had other things to think of that made her serious, very different to them, who had been born with silver spoons in their mouths. These sentiments, and the tone of them, and their slight incoherence, quite upset Bob's gravity. He laughed long and merrily, and only recovered himself when Polly sprang up in a tempest and rushed to the door to escape. Then, with one rapid movement, he overtook and stopped her, and begged her pardon with pleas enough to soften a heart of adamant. But Polly's was harder than adamant. "I am not a baby; you treat me like a baby!" gasped she, crimson and furious. "I won't be called a mouse! My name is Mary Curtis!" Mrs. Livingstone was not present to keep order, but Maggie knew by Polly's way that she was really hurt and mortified; so she interfered, and bade Bob let her alone; she was not used to be teased.

"Then it is good for her—rub the starch out," replied he, exasperatingly, and went so far in his teasing that Polly, quite beside herself with passion, struck him in the waistcoat with all her little might. It was a mistake, as Bob instructed her the next minute, kissing her roughly, and then as roughly letting her go. The instant she was released, she ran across the hall, half blinded with tears, and, after tripping and stumbling twice or thrice on the stairs in the dark, gained the safe refuge of Maggie's room, where Maggie found her presently, weeping fit to break her heart. Polly's self-respect was grievously wounded; if she could not make Bob behave to her like a lady, what was to become of her amongst children! Maggie was perplexed. The ways and customs of Blackthorn Grange admitted of a good deal of kissing amongst friends, but Polly evidently considered a kiss a mortal offence. She essayed to comfort her by representing the fact in its local light.

"Don't make such a fuss, Polly; one would think you were half killed," said she. "What does a kiss matter? and it was only Bob."

"He is a perfect bear!" sobbed Polly. "I wish I had never come!"

"You cross little savage thing! And it is not very polite to tell me Bob's a bear! He is nothing of the kind. You ought to feel flattered; he would not plague you if he did not think you nice. Maria Spinks was here a whole month, and he never offered to kiss her once."

Polly dried her eyes and looked up. "He is so abominably rough," she began, and then was scared into silence at the recollection of the blow *she* had given *him*, which, strictly speaking, was far more in the nature of an assault than a kiss.

"Ah, you may well stop and bethink yourself of his provocation," said Maggie, significantly.

"Did I hurt him?" asked Polly, with lovely wistfulness.

"Dreadfully! How could you help it, hitting him as you did purposely in the region of the heart? And Bob is very delicate. It is easy to be sorry for it afterwards, but that is the way people get into passions, and commit murder, or manslaughter, at least."

"I wish I could go away to-morrow before breakfast," said Polly, ready to sink with shame and self-reproach.

"That is impossible. You will just have to do penance and sit by Bob, and if you take my advice you will behave as usual, and say nothing about to-night. It is lucky my mother was not there; she would never forgive you for hurting Bob."

"I'm sure I won't mention it, Maggie; I think I should die if anybody else knew," said Polly, ruefully. "It has made me feel so small and contemptible. If I had only remembered myself and kept my temper it would not have happened."

"Nonsense; it can't be helped now; think of the old song—'If a body kiss a body, need a body cry?' If you had been here at our New Year's party, you might have been kissed a dozen times under the mistletoe, if Bob had not intimated that he would not stand it; nothing varies more in kind and degree than a kiss, you know."

"I don't know; but I want no more of Bob's kind and degree; my cheek and chin are red yet."

"Well, don't complain—it is your own fault; you may be sure it is when I tell you so," said Maggie; and Polly held her peace.

It was difficult next morning when Polly went down to breakfast a minute or two late. Mrs. Livingstone offered her cheek to her, and Bob, with not a little extra colour in his face, gave her a cordial, expressive shake of the hand. Maggie had reported Polly's wrath and distress in unmitigated terms, and Bob was sorry he had been "a perfect bear," and "so abominably rough." She was much too shy and conscious to talk in her wonted way, and he perceived he had gone too far and frightened her—and heartily vexed at himself he was for his blundering stupidity. He transgressed in the opposite direction that day, and was as tenderly assiduous as a lover; Polly did not appreciate his kindness, but seeing that his repentance for his great offence was deep and unfeigned, she forgave him fully and freely—so fully that when he took his leave of her at the Warden House, whither he had driven her and Maggie over in his dog-cart, and said humbly: "We are friends again, Polly, are we not? And you will come again at Easter?"

Polly, with a rosy beneficent countenance shining on him, replied: "Yes—if I may."

CHAPTER IV.

Polly's adventures at the Warden House were passed chiefly in the school-room. The children were reasonably good, and Mrs. Stapylton was abundantly satisfied with her new governess's cheerfulness, skill, and industry; but the first time she sounded her praises to her husband, the captain replied: "Don't expect to keep the little woman long, my dear. She is uncommonly pretty, and I am very much mistaken if Bob Livingstone is not sweet on her; he always inquires after her so amiably when we meet at the market table."

"Oh!" said Mrs. Stapylton; and the next time the meet was at the Warden House, she bade her husband invite Bob to ride over the previous day and sleep; and she contrived to have a lady short at dinner, and asked Polly to be so kind as to leave lessons for once and fill the gap; for she was an amiable woman, married after her own heart, and would be glad, as she said, to give such a nice little thing a chance.

Polly had the sagacity to leave her profession up-stairs, and to come down charming in her white dress and white ribbons, but Bob felt it was not quite like having her to himself at Blackthorn Grange. Yet she was much easier here, and talked and was as gay as any one. There was nothing in Polly to provoke or invite an impertinence. The ladies made no difference with her, and her face was enough to ensure her kindness at first sight from men. If Bob was a person to be influenced by other people's opinions, he heard many golden ones of Polly at the Warden House, and all casually expressed without reference to him. Perhaps he did carry away an idea or two of her more meaning than any he brought—Maggie certainly believed it, and began to insinuate the same in her letters to her friend; but Polly was heedless and indifferent to Bob, and her work and duty were much more in her head than "nonsense," which sufficiently accounted for her never responding to Maggie's hints and queries.

Easter did not linger, but was soon come, bringing with it Polly's second visit to the Grange. It was a lovely Easter that year—warm, sunny, serene as May, with hedges green, pear-trees and cherry-trees in blossom, and even roses in bud under the shelter of the eaves on the south wall of the old house. They made it quite a gay season at Blackthorn Grange, and Polly, whose dignities had worn easier already, entered into it with all the natural joyousness of her temper and time of life. She was exceedingly pleasant about the house, and the many visitors, kinsfolk, and neighbours,

who came there during her stay, were charmed, and regarded her with a significant interest which none of the family discouraged. Mrs. Livingstone would walk her about the great walled garden for an hour at a time, talking to her no one but themselves knew what about, but the two were excellent company to each other, and often Bob made a third. Laura was rather quizzical on the subject of Maggie's friend and her brother, but that was her disagreeable way, and Fanny and Maggie made up to them for it by all sorts of little consideratenesses, which they profited by without observing. And every day some excursion was planned which threw them together. Now it was to Cranstown Rocks, now to Haviland Priory, and one day, the most memorable of all, to Beech Grove, the Livingstones' ancestral manor, Bob's inheritance, where Maggie informed Polly that he would most likely go to live when he married and settled. It was an old place, though not so old as the Grange, and it had fallen into some neglect from having been let to a careless tenant, whose lease was, however, nearly run out; but as Polly said: "With a little trouble and taste, it might be made beautiful." Bob asked how she would go about to improve it, and as he trotted her through the rooms and the garden, he treasured up all her little views and opinions, which she was perfectly free with, not at all as if they were a matter of personal concern. And, perhaps, they were not. Polly had a faculty for planning and suggesting, but she was not conscious of any peculiar sentiment for the place as Bob's future home, though everybody, himself included, gave her credit for it.

And very happy Bob was in his illusion. Polly was quite kind enough to please him, and her shy trick of blushing, and her sudden vivacities and caprices soon charmed his heart away entirely. And hers? She was a mystery to herself; she liked Bob; she liked to be near him; once, when he took her by surprise and kissed her, she was not so furious but that he thought he might some day venture again; in fact, if she had given way to nature, she would have loved him very sweetly and tenderly. But all her principles were against giving way, and whenever she felt inclined to lapse into weakness, she would recite to herself all her mother's litany of impediments, and pains and penalties in marriage. This sufficiently proved her in danger, and set her on her guard against it, poor little Polly!

The Easter visit was extended to a fortnight, and before half of it was over, the servants in the house, the men on the farm, the very dogs even had learnt to demean themselves to Polly as to a little lady in whom their master had a special interest. Mrs. Livingstone, Laura, Fanny, and Bob's two chief bachelor friends were ready with their consent whenever it might be required; and in the absence of the principals would discuss their private affairs without the smallest delicacy or reserve. Only Maggie held herself in an attitude of doubt, and this Laura treated as the supremest affectation. "You know your precious Polly will say 'Yes' the very first minute Bob asks her, and be only too glad!" the quizzical sister would tauntingly aver; to which Maggie would make answer that she only wished she was as sure of it as Laura appeared to be.

But Maggie could be sure of nothing. Polly was a puzzle and trial to her at this moment, and she was constantly trying to solve her by all manner of cunning experiments and questions. On their last evening together she went so far as to say in the privacy of their bedroom: "I fancied once you were going to be fond of Bob for my sake, Polly, and I'm disappointed in you. You are not half good to him, you little cross thing, and you look him in the face as frankly as any of us—that's a sign you don't care for him: tiresome toad that you are!"

"Bob's eyes are blue," said Polly, with abstraction, but as coolly as if she were repeating "two and two are four."

"You have no particular prejudice against blue eyes, have you?" inquired Maggie, in a tone of affront.

"No! you dear old Maggie, why should I? Yours are blue."

After a brief silence Maggie returned to the charge: "You are coming to see us again at Midsummer—now you need not seek any excuse, for I won't take it! You are coming to see us again at Midsummer. Say *yes*, or don't open your mouth." Polly kept her mouth shut. "Have you been struck dumb? You *are* coming, I know you are! I'll never be friends with you again if you don't." Polly's lips still never stirred. "O, Polly, don't be a silly little donkey! Look here—is there anybody loves you as much as I do, unless it be dear old Bob? and you are going to throw it all to the winds!"

"Yes, there's Jane loves me, and I must spend my Midsummer at home with her and my mother," said Polly, thus solemnly adjured.

"That's all right; but you'll come *here* first—*promise*—I'll shake you if you don't."

Polly did not exactly promise, but she begged off her shaking with something Maggie accepted as an equivalent; and in the morning, when she was driven off to her duties at the Warden House by Bob himself, it was considered an understood thing that at Midsummer, before going home to Norminster, she should pay another visit to Blackthorn Grange. It was a lovely April day, with the sun in full glow, and the orchards all pink and white with apple-blossom. The country was very fine and luxuriant between the Grange and Lanswood, and Polly's eyes and soul took delight in its spring beauty. She was feeling happy, unconsciously happy, and the radiance of her heart shone in her countenance. Maggie, at whom she often looked round, thought she had never seen her so sweetly pretty before; and Bob, though his plan of courtship was all laid out,

and he had no intention of being precipitate, found himself more than once on the brink of asking the question which would decide both their fortunes.

"You would not mind spending your life in the country, Polly, little town-bred lady as you are?" said he, gaily.

"I like the country best," replied Polly.

"When you come to us at Midsummer, I shall have Stella ready, and you shall learn to ride—all the girls ride hereabouts."

"But they ride from children. I am rather timid; I am not sure that I shall like it."

"I shall teach you myself," said Bob, as if that would remove all difficulties, and he glanced down at the little creature beside him with fond admiration. None of her friends' opinions of Polly had yet grown up to her own estimate of her dignity—not even Bob's. He laughed indulgently at her practical airs, and called her his Mouse and his Blossom, with a tender patronage that she could not repress, though she sincerely wished to do so. It seemed to Polly sometimes as if his will were the stronger, and controlled hers, however she fought against it; and that was the fact. Bob was not a particularly profound person, but he perfectly fathomed Polly's mixture of pride and shyness, lovingness, doubt, fear, and trembling towards himself, and he believed it quite in his duty and business to tame her with kindness, yet firmness—much as he was taming his beautiful shy filly, Stella; as for letting her go her own way, or supposing she would defeat him in the end, it never entered Bob's head; and had her mother's warnings and philosophy been laid before him, they would have been far too strange and unnatural for his honest comprehension. He religiously believed that every nice young woman wished to be married, and why not Polly, who was so extremely nice?

The drive to Lanswood was very pleasant all the way, and when Polly was left behind at the Warden House, to think it over, she could not but know why it had been so. Love is the best of companions. "Dear old Bob, I'm afraid I should grow foolishly fond of him if I went often to Blackthorn Grange. I had much better stop away at Midsummer," said she, to herself; but perhaps she did not mean it. She was rather dull and absent for a day or two, but she soon brightened up at her work, which was not severe or disagreeable. In truth, her situation was very comfortable, and she had no injuries or hardships to make the notion of escape welcome; but still she counted the weeks to the holidays, and did not grieve to see them pass. And in every letter Maggie told her how much nearer Midsummer was, and mentioned many delightful parties of pleasure and excursions which were standing over until her coming. At every such allusion Polly's heart underwent that physical spasm which she had described to her friend as afflicting her before she set forth on her career as a governess. To go or not to go to the Grange became her thought by day and night. She was pulled very hard both ways. She did not deny to herself that the Grange was a happy place for a holiday; but her principles of so many years' careful home cultivation were in peril there, while her head still approved of them so entirely that she felt it was inconsistent and wrong to walk into temptation with her eyes open and her judgment unobscured. Nobody at the Grange denounced marriage as a state of suffering bondage, or children as a perpetual care; indeed, Laura and Fanny were both engaged, and Maggie, though not so far gone as they were, frankly avowed that she had only refused the curate because she did not like him; if she had liked him she should have had no scruple about accepting his proposal, and taking her luck for what might follow.

Polly had no notion of casting her burden on other people's shoulders, or she might have appealed to Jane for counsel in the case; besides, she was fond of deciding for herself, or rather of drifting into decisions which were generally in accordance with her inclinations, secret or expressed. In this manner she drifted into a decision that she would go to Blackthorn Grange, but it should be for the last time; and a few days after, there she was, in all her pretty dignity and grace, and everybody in and about the house was talking about her and the master, and drawing only one conclusion from this third visit within the half-year.

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CHAPTER VIII.

Late that evening, I was surprised at my lodgings by a visit from Mr. Bruff.

There was a noticeable change in the lawyer's manner. It had lost its usual confidence and spirit. He shook hands with me, for the first time in his life, in silence.

"Are yon going back to Hampstead?" I asked, by way of saying something.

"I have just left Hampstead," he answered. "I know, Mr. Franklin, that you have got at the truth at last. But, I tell you plainly, if I could have foreseen the price that was to be paid for it, I should have preferred leaving you in the dark."

"You have seen Rachel?"

"I have come here after taking her back to Portland Place; it was impossible to let her return in the carriage by herself. I can hardly hold you responsible—considering that you saw her in my house and by my permission—for the shock that this unlucky interview has inflicted on her. All I can do is to provide against a repetition of the mischief. She is young—she has a resolute spirit—she will get over this, with time and rest to help her. I want to be assured that you will do nothing to hinder her recovery. May I depend on your making no second attempt to see her—except with my sanction and approval?"

"After what she has suffered, and after what I have suffered," I said, "you may rely on me."

"I have your promise?"

"You have my promise."

Mr. Bruff looked relieved. He put down his hat, and drew his chair nearer to mine.

"That's settled!" he said. "Now, about the future—*your* future, I mean. To my mind, the result of the extraordinary turn which the matter has now taken is briefly this. In the first place, we are sure that Rachel has told you the whole truth, as plainly as words can tell it. In the second place—though we know that there must be some dreadful mistake somewhere—we can hardly blame her for believing you to be guilty, on the evidence of her own senses; backed, as that evidence has been, by circumstances which appear, on the face of them, to tell dead against you."

There I interposed. "I don't blame Rachel," I said. "I only regret that she could not prevail on herself to speak more plainly to me at the time."

"You might as well regret that Rachel is not somebody else," rejoined Mr. Bruff. "And even then, I doubt if a girl of any delicacy, whose heart had been set on marrying you, could have brought herself to charge you to your face with being a thief. Anyhow, it was not in Rachel's nature to do it. In a very different matter to this matter of yours—which placed her, however, in a position not altogether unlike her position towards you—I happen to know that she was influenced by a similar motive to the motive which actuated her conduct in your case. Besides, as she told me herself, on our way to town this evening, if she *had* spoken plainly, she would no more have believed your denial then than she believes it now. What answer can you make to that? There is no answer to be made to it. Come! come! Mr. Franklin, my view of the case has been proved to be all wrong, I admit—but, as things are now, my advice may be worth having for all that. I tell you plainly, we shall be wasting our time, and cudgelling our brains to no purpose, if we attempt to try back, and unravel this frightful complication from the beginning. Let us close our minds resolutely to all that happened last year at Lady Verinder's country house; and let us look to what we *can* discover in the future, instead of to what we can *not* discover in the past."

"Surely you forget," I said, "that the whole thing is essentially a matter of the past—so far as I am concerned?"

"Answer me this," retorted Mr. Bruff. "Is the Moonstone at the bottom of all the mischief—or is it not?"

"It is—of course."

"Very good. What do we believe was done with the Moonstone, when it was taken to London?"

"It was pledged to Mr. Luker."

"We know that you are not the person who pledged it. Do we know who did?"

"No."

"Where do we believe the Moonstone to be now?"

"Deposited in the keeping of Mr. Luker's bankers."

"Exactly. Now observe. We are already in the month of June. Towards the end of the month (I can't be particular to a day) a year will have elapsed from the time when we believe the jewel to have been pledged. There is a chance—to say the least—that the person who pawned it, may be prepared to redeem it when the year's time has expired. If he redeems it, Mr. Luker must himself—according to the terms of his own arrangement—take the Diamond out of his bankers' hands. Under these circumstances, I propose setting a watch at the bank, as the present month draws to an end, and discovering who the person is to whom Mr. Luker restores the Moonstone. Do you see it now?"

I admitted (a little unwillingly) that the idea was a new one, at any rate.

"It's Mr. Murthwaite's idea quite as much as mine," said Mr. Bruff. "It might have never entered my head, but for a conversation we had together some time since. If Mr. Murthwaite is right, the Indians are likely to be on the look-out at the bank, towards the end of the month too—and something serious may come of it. What comes of it doesn't matter to you and me—except as it may help us to lay our hands on the mysterious Somebody who pawned the Diamond. That person, you may rely on it, is responsible (I don't pretend to know how) for the position in which you stand at this moment; and that person alone can set you right in Rachel's estimation."

"I can't deny," I said, "that the plan you propose meets the difficulty in a way that is very daring, and very ingenious, and very new. But——"

"But you have an objection to make?"

"Yes. My objection is, that your proposal obliges us to wait."

"Granted. As I reckon the time, it requires you to wait about a fortnight—more or less. Is that so very long?"

"It's a life-time, Mr. Bruff, in such a situation as mine. My existence will be simply unendurable to me, unless I do something towards clearing my character at once."

"Well, well, I understand that. Have you thought yet of what you can do?"

"I have thought of consulting Sergeant Cuff."

"He has retired from the police. It's useless to expect the Sergeant to help you."

"I know where to find him; and I can but try."

"Try," said Mr. Bruff, after a moment's consideration. "The case has assumed such an extraordinary aspect since Sergeant Cuff's time, that you *may* revive his interest in the inquiry. Try, and let me hear the result. In the meanwhile," he continued, rising, "if you make no discoveries between this, and the end of the month, am I free to try, on my side, what can be done by keeping a look-out at the bank?"

"Certainly," I answered—"unless I relieve you of all necessity for trying the experiment in the interval."

Mr. Bruff smiled, and took up his hat.

"Tell Sergeant Cuff," he rejoined, "that *I* say the discovery of the truth depends on the discovery of the person who pawned the Diamond. And let me hear what the Sergeant's experience says to that."

So we parted, for that night.

Early the next morning, I set forth for the little town of Dorking—the place of Sergeant Cuff's retirement, as indicated to me by Betteredge.

Inquiring at the hotel, I received the necessary directions for finding the Sergeant's cottage. It was approached by a quiet bye-road, a little way out of the town, and it stood snugly in the middle of its own plot of garden ground, protected by a good brick wall at the back and the sides, and by a high quickset hedge in front. The gate, ornamented at the upper part by smartly-painted trellis-work, was locked. After ringing at the bell, I peered through the trellis-work, and saw the great Cuff's favourite flower everywhere; blooming in his garden, clustering over his door, looking in at his windows. Far from the crimes and the mysteries of the great city, the illustrious thief-taker was placidly living out the last Sybarite years of his life, smothered in roses!

A decent elderly woman opened the gate to me, and at once annihilated all the hopes I had built on securing the assistance of Sergeant Cuff. He had started, only the day before, on a journey to Ireland.

"Has he gone there on business?" I asked.

The woman smiled. "He has only one business now, sir," she said; "and that's roses. Some great man's gardener in Ireland has found out something new in the growing of roses—and Mr. Cuff's away to inquire into it."

"Do you know when he will be back?"

"It's quite uncertain, sir. Mr. Cuff said he should come back directly, or be away some time, just according as he found the new discovery worth nothing, or worth looking into. If you have any message to leave for him, I'll take care, sir, that he gets it."

I gave her my card, having first written on it in pencil: "I have something to say about the Moonstone. Let me hear from you as soon as you get back." That done, there was nothing left but to submit to circumstances, and return to London.

In the irritable condition of my mind, at the time of which I am now writing, the abortive result of my journey to the Sergeant's cottage simply aggravated the restless impulse in me to be doing something. On the day of my return from Dorking, I determined that the next morning should find me bent on a new effort at forcing my way, through all obstacles, from the darkness to the light.

What form was my next experiment to take?

If the excellent Betteredge had been present while I was considering that question, and if he had been let into the secret of my thoughts, he would, no doubt, have declared that the German side of me was, on this occasion, my uppermost side. To speak seriously,

it is perhaps possible that my German training was in some degree responsible for the labyrinth of useless speculations in which I now involved myself. For the greater part of the night, I sat smoking, and building up theories, one more profoundly improbable than another. When I did get to sleep, my waking fancies pursued me in dreams. I rose the next morning, with Objective-Subjective and Subjective-Objective inextricably entangled together in my mind; and I began the day which was to witness my next effort at practical action of some kind, by doubting whether I had any sort of right (on purely philosophical grounds) to consider any sort of thing (the Diamond included) as existing at all.

How long I might have remained lost in the mist of my own metaphysics, if I had been left to extricate myself, it is impossible for me to say. As the event proved, accident came to my rescue, and happily delivered me. I happened to wear, that morning, the same coat which I had worn on the day of my interview with Rachel. Searching for something else in one of the pockets, I came upon a crumpled piece of paper, and, taking it out, found Betteredge's forgotten letter in my hand.

It seemed hard on my good old friend to leave him without a reply. I went to my writing-table, and read his letter again.

A letter which has nothing of the slightest importance in it, is not always an easy letter to answer. Betteredge's present effort at corresponding with me came within this category. Mr. Candy's assistant, otherwise Ezra Jennings, had told his master that he had seen me; and Mr. Candy, in his turn, wanted to see me and say something to me, when I was next in the neighbourhood of Frizinghall. What was to be said in answer to that, which would be worth the paper it was written on? I sat idly drawing likenesses from memory of Mr. Candy's remarkable-looking assistant, on the sheet of paper which I had vowed to dedicate to Betteredge—until it suddenly occurred to me that here was the irrepressible Ezra Jennings getting in my way again! I threw a dozen portraits, at least, of the man with the piebald hair (the hair in every case, remarkably like), into the waste-paper basket—and then and there, wrote my answer to Betteredge. It was a perfectly common-place letter—but it had one excellent effect on me. The effort of writing a few sentences, in plain English, completely cleared my mind of the cloudy nonsense which had filled it since the previous day.

Devoting myself once more to the elucidation of the impenetrable puzzle which my own position presented to me, I now tried to meet the difficulty by investigating it from a plainly practical point of view. The events of the memorable night being still unintelligible to me, I looked a little farther back, and searched my memory of the earlier hours of the birthday for any incident—which might prove of some assistance to me in finding the clue.

Had anything happened while Rachel and I were finishing the painted door? or, later, when I rode over to Frizinghall? or afterwards, when I went back with Godfrey Ablewhite and his sisters? or, later again, when I put the Moonstone into Rachel's hands? or, later still, when the company came, and we all assembled round the dinner-table? My memory disposed of that string of questions readily enough, until I came to the last. Looking back at the social events of the birthday dinner, I found myself brought to a standstill at the outset of the inquiry. I was not even capable of accurately remembering the number of the guests who had sat at the same table with me.

To feel myself completely at fault here, and to conclude, thereupon, that the incidents of the dinner might especially repay the trouble of investigating them, formed parts of the same mental process, in my case. I believe other people, in a similar situation, would have reasoned as I did. When the pursuit of our own interests causes us to become objects of inquiry to ourselves, we are naturally suspicious of what we don't know. Once in possession of the names of the persons who had been present at the dinner, I resolved—as a means of enriching the deficient resources of my own memory—to appeal to the memories of the rest of the guests; to write down all that they could recollect of the social events of the birthday; and to test the result, thus obtained, by the light of what had happened afterwards when the company had left the house.

This last and newest of my many contemplated experiments in the art of inquiry—which Betteredge would probably have attributed to the clear-headed, or French, side of me being uppermost for the moment—may fairly claim record here, on its own merits. Unlikely as it may seem, I had now actually groped my way to the root of the matter at last. All I wanted was a hint to guide me in the right direction at starting. Before another day had passed over my head, that hint was given me by one of the company who had been present at the birthday feast!

With the plan of proceeding which I now had in view, it was first necessary to possess the complete list of the guests. This I could easily obtain from Gabriel Betteredge. I determined to go back to Yorkshire on that day, and to begin my contemplated investigation the next morning.

It was just too late to start by the train which left London before noon. There was no alternative but to wait, nearly three hours, for the departure of the next train. Was there anything I could do in London, which might usefully occupy this interval of time?

My thoughts went back again obstinately to the birthday dinner.

Though I had forgotten the numbers, and, in many cases, the names of the guests, I remembered readily enough that by far the larger proportion of them came from Frizinghall, or from its neighbourhood. But the larger proportion was not all. Some few of us were not regular residents in the county. I myself was one of the few. Mr. Murthwaite was another. Godfrey Ablewhite was a third. Mr. Bruff—no: I

called to mind that business had prevented Mr. Bruff from making one of the party. Had any ladies been present, whose usual residence was in London? I could only remember Miss Clack as coming within this latter category. However, here were three of the guests, at any rate, whom it was clearly advisable for me to see before I left town. I drove off at once to Mr. Bruff's office; not knowing the addresses of the persons of whom I was in search, and thinking it probable that he might put me in the way of finding them.

Mr. Bruff proved to be too busy to give me more than a minute of his valuable time. In that minute, however, he contrived to dispose —in the most discouraging manner—of all the questions I had to put to him.

In the first place, he considered my newly-discovered method of finding a clue to the mystery as something too purely fanciful to be seriously discussed. In the second, third, and fourth places, Mr. Murthwaite was now on his way back to the scene of his past adventures; Miss Clack had suffered losses, and had settled, from motives of economy, in France; Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite might, or might not, be discoverable somewhere in London. Suppose I inquired at his club? And suppose I excused Mr. Bruff, if he went back to his business and wished me good morning?

The field of inquiry in London, being now so narrowed as only to include the one necessity of discovering Godfrey's address, I took the lawyer's hint, and drove to his club.

In the hall, I met with one of the members, who was an old friend of my cousin's, and who was also an acquaintance of my own. This gentleman, after enlightening me on the subject of Godfrey's address, told me of two recent events in his life, which were of some importance in themselves, and which had not previously reached my ears.

It appeared that Godfrey, far from being discouraged by Rachel's withdrawal from her engagement to him, had made matrimonial advances soon afterwards to another young lady, reputed to be a great heiress. His suit had prospered, and his marriage had been considered as a settled and certain thing. But, here again, the engagement had been suddenly and unexpectedly broken off—owing, it was said, on this occasion, to a serious difference of opinion between the bridegroom and the lady's father, on the question of settlements.

As some compensation for this second matrimonial disaster, Godfrey had soon afterwards found himself the object of fond pecuniary remembrance, on the part of one of his many admirers. A rich old lady—highly respected at the Mothers'-Small-Clothes-Conversion-Society, and a great friend of Miss Clack's (to whom she had left nothing but a mourning ring)—had bequeathed to the admirable and meritorious Godfrey a legacy of five thousand pounds. After receiving this handsome addition to his own modest pecuniary resources, he had been heard to say that he felt the necessity of getting a little respite from his charitable labours, and that his doctor prescribed "a run on the Continent, as likely to be productive of much future benefit to his health." If I wanted to see him, it would be advisable to lose no time in paying my contemplated visit.

I went, then and there, to pay my visit.

The same fatality which had made me just one day too late in calling on Sergeant Cuff, made me again one day too late in calling on Godfrey. He had left London, on the previous morning, by the tidal train for Dover. He was to cross to Ostend; and his servant believed he was going on to Brussels. The time of his return was a little uncertain; but I might be sure that he would be away at least three months.

I went back to my lodgings a little depressed in spirits. Three of the guests at the birthday dinner—and those three all exceptionally intelligent people—were out of my reach, at the very time when it was most important to be able to communicate with them. My last hopes now rested on Betteredge, and on the friends of the late Lady Verinder whom I might still find living in the neighbourhood of Rachel's country house.

On this occasion, I travelled straight to Frizinghall—the town being now the central point in my field of inquiry. I arrived too late in the evening to be able to communicate with Betteredge. The next morning, I sent a messenger with a letter, requesting him to join me at the hotel, at his earliest convenience.

Having taken the precaution—partly to save time, partly to accommodate Betteredge—of sending my messenger in a fly, I had a reasonable prospect, if no delays occurred, of seeing the old man within less than two hours from the time when I had sent for him. During this interval, I arranged to employ myself in opening my contemplated inquiry, among the guests present at the birthday dinner who were personally known to me, and who were easily within my reach. These were my relatives, the Ablewhites, and Mr. Candy. The doctor had expressed a special wish to see me, and the doctor lived in the next street. So to Mr. Candy I went first.

After what Betteredge had told me, I naturally anticipated finding traces in the doctor's face of the severe illness from which he had suffered. But I was utterly unprepared for such a change as I saw in him when he entered the room and shook hands with me. His eyes were dim; his hair had turned completely grey; his face was wizen; his figure had shrunk. I looked at the once lively, rattlepated, humourous little doctor—associated in my remembrance with the perpetration of incorrigible social indiscretions and innumerable boyish jokes—and I saw nothing left of his former self, but the old tendency to vulgar smartness in his dress. The man was a wreck; but his clothes and his jewellery—in cruel mockery of the change in him—were as gay and gaudy as ever.

"I have often thought of you, Mr. Blake," he said; "and I am heartily glad to see you again at last. If there is anything I can do for you, pray command my services, sir—pray command my services!"

He said those few common-place words with needless hurry and eagerness, and with a curiosity to know what had brought me to Yorkshire, which he was perfectly—I might say childishly—incapable of concealing from notice.

With the object that I had in view, I had of course foreseen the necessity of entering into some sort of personal explanation, before I could hope to interest people, mostly strangers to me, in doing their best to assist my inquiry. On the journey to Frizinghall I had arranged what my explanation was to be—and I seized the opportunity now offered to me of trying the effect of it on Mr. Candy.

"I was in Yorkshire, the other day, and I am in Yorkshire again now, on rather a romantic errand," I said. "It is a matter, Mr. Candy, in which the late Lady Verinder's friends all took some interest. You remember the mysterious loss of the Indian Diamond, now nearly a year since? Circumstances have lately happened which lead to the hope that it may yet be found—and I am interesting myself, as one of the family, in recovering it. Among the obstacles in my way, there is the necessity of collecting again all the evidence which was discovered at the time, and more if possible. There are peculiarities in this case which make it desirable to revive my recollection of everything that happened in the house, on the evening of Miss Verinder's birthday. And I venture to appeal to her late mother's friends who were present on that occasion, to lend me the assistance of their memories——"

I had got as far as that in rehearsing my explanatory phrases—when I was suddenly checked by seeing plainly in Mr. Candy's face that my experiment on him was a total failure.

The little doctor sat restlessly picking at the points of his fingers all the time I was speaking. His dim watery eyes were fixed on my face with an expression of vacant and wistful inquiry very painful to see. What he was thinking of, it was impossible to divine. The one thing clearly visible was that I had failed, after the first two or three words, in fixing his attention. The only chance of recalling him to himself appeared to lie in changing the subject. I tried a new topic immediately.

"So much," I said gaily, "for what brings me to Frizinghall! Now, Mr. Candy, it's your turn. You sent me a message by Gabriel Betteredge——"

He left off picking at his fingers, and suddenly brightened up.

"Yes! yes! yes!" he exclaimed eagerly. "That's it! I sent you a message!"

"And Betteredge duly communicated it by letter," I went on. "You had something to say to me, the next time I was in your neighbourhood. Well, Mr. Candy, here I am!"

"Here you are!" echoed the doctor. "And Betteredge was quite right. I had something to say to you. That was my message. Betteredge is a wonderful man. What a memory! At his age, what a memory!"

He dropped back into silence, and began picking at his fingers again. Recollecting what I had heard from Betteredge about the effect of the fever on his memory, I went on with the conversation, in the hope that I might help him at starting.

"It's a long time since we met," I said. "We last saw each other, at the last birthday dinner my poor aunt was ever to give."

"That's it!" cried Mr. Candy. "The birthday dinner!" He started impulsively to his feet, and looked at me. A deep flush suddenly overspread his faded face, and he abruptly sat down again, as if conscious of having betrayed a weakness which he would fain have concealed. It was plain, pitiably plain, that he was aware of his own defect of memory, and that he was bent on hiding it from the observation of his friends.

Thus far, he had appealed to my compassion only. But the words he had just said—few as they were—roused my curiosity instantly to the highest pitch. The birthday dinner had already become the one event in the past at which I looked back with strangely mixed feelings of hope and distrust. And here was the birthday dinner unmistakably proclaiming itself as the subject on which Mr. Candy had something important to say to me!

I attempted to help him out once more. But, this time, my own interests were at the bottom of my compassionate motive, and they hurried me on a little too abruptly to the end that I had in view.

"It's nearly a year now," I said, "since we sat at that pleasant table. Have you made any memorandum—in your diary, or otherwise—of what you wanted to say to me?"

Mr. Candy understood the suggestion, and showed me that he understood it, as an insult.

"I require no memorandums, Mr. Blake," he said, stiffly enough. "I am not such a very old man, yet—and my memory (thank God) is to be thoroughly depended on!"

It is needless to say that I declined to understand that he was offended with me.

"I wish I could say the same of *my* memory," I answered. "When *I* try to think of matters that are a year old, I seldom find my remembrance as vivid as I could wish it to be. Take the dinner at Lady Verinder's, for instance——"

Mr. Candy brightened up again, the moment the allusion passed my lips.

"Ah! the dinner, the dinner at Lady Verinder's!" he exclaimed more eagerly than ever. "I have got something to say to you about that."

His eyes looked at me again with the painful expression of inquiry, so wistful, so vacant, so miserably helpless to see. He was evidently trying hard, and trying in vain, to recover the lost recollection. "It was a very pleasant dinner," he burst out suddenly, with an air of saying exactly what he had wanted to say. "A very pleasant dinner, Mr. Blake, wasn't it?" He nodded and smiled, and appeared to think, poor fellow, that he had succeeded in concealing the total failure of his memory, by a well-timed exertion of his own presence of mind.

It was so distressing that I at once shifted the talk—deeply as I was interested in his re-

covering the lost remembrance—to topics of local interest.

Here, he got on glibly enough. Trumpery little scandals and quarrels in the town, some of them as much as a month old, appeared to recur to his memory readily. He chattered on, with something of the smooth gossiping fluency of former times. But there were moments, even in the full flow of his talkativeness, when he suddenly hesitated—looked at me for a moment with the vacant inquiry once more in his eyes—controlled himself—and went on again. I submitted patiently to my martyrdom (it is surely nothing less than martyrdom, to a man of cosmopolitan sympathies, to absorb in silent resignation the news of a country town?) until the clock on the chimney-piece told me that my visit had been prolonged beyond half an hour. Having now some right to consider the sacrifice as complete, I rose to take leave. As we shook hands, Mr. Candy reverted to the birthday festival of his own accord.

"I am so glad we have met again," he said. "I had it on my mind—I really had it on my mind, Mr. Blake, to speak to you. About the dinner at Lady Verinder's, you know? A pleasant dinner—really a pleasant dinner now, wasn't it?"

On repeating the phrase, he seemed to feel hardly as certain of having prevented me from suspecting his lapse of memory, as he had felt on the first occasion. The wistful look clouded his face again; and, after apparently designing to accompany me to the street door, he suddenly changed his mind, rang the bell for the servant, and remained in the drawing-room.

I went slowly down the doctor's stairs, feeling the disheartening conviction that he really had something to say which it was vitally important to me to hear, and that he was morally incapable of saying it. The effort of remembering that he wanted to speak to me was, but too evidently, the only effort that his enfeebled memory was now able to achieve.

Just as I had reached the bottom of the stairs, and had turned a corner on my way to the outer hall, a door opened softly somewhere on the ground floor of the house, and a gentle voice said behind me;—

"I am afraid, sir, you find Mr. Candy sadly changed?"

I turned round, and found myself face to face with Ezra Jennings.

LEAVES FROM THE MAHOGANY TREE.

A PRETTY KETTLE OF FISH.

Horace in one of his noblest odes speaks finely of the triple brass that must have wrapped the heart of that venturous man who first launched forth in hollow palm tree, or on rude cedar raft, to explore the great howling wilderness of blue ocean, never before ploughed by keel or fanned by sail. Great, indeed, was that primeval voyager, but he needs no eulogy from us. No one will question his greatness. But we have in view a still greater, more daring, and heroic man—*the man who ate the first fish.* A great experimenter, a Titan of the first water, a Napoleon of enterprise, an Alexander, a Leonidas, a Julius Cæsar, rolled into one. He had with his rude cookery, probably, exhausted the other elements of earth and air, and there was nothing worth eating in the fire but salamanders. His flint-headed knife and fork had been thrust into the ox and the camel, the horse and the ass; perhaps he was weary of these creatures, and craved a new and more savoury dish; perhaps deserted by his subjects, and beleagured by enemies on some scorched, sea-girt Syrian rock, he had nothing left to eat, and was driven by Invention's mother to search a new place for new food.

The sea alone now remained to explore. It was a great lottery, perhaps without prizes. Its inmates might refuse his bait, or, when they took it, might prove poisonous and forbidden to man. He had seen the porpoises roll by, like spokes of some half-hidden machinery; he had seen the sharks' fins gleam white through the surf; no, he resolves to starve; but another day arises hot and lurid, keener pangs of hunger seize him, he must eat or die. He has only had half a scorpion since Monday week; he is faint, and has scarcely strength to hurl down blocks of rock on the more daring of the enemy who try to climb to where he is citadelled. He hastily unravels one of his knitted stockings and forms a fishing line; he baits it with a dragon-fly that has just settled near him on an aloe flower. He drops the line into the blue glittering sea. He lies on his stomach on a cliff five hundred feet above and watches. For ten minutes there is no bite. All at once he sees a monster rise near his float. There spreads a surging whirlpool; then a dead weight almost drags him in over the precipice.

Slowly (for he is weak now—he who could once brain a bull at a stroke, and overtake the antelope) he drags up the monster, hand over hand. It is a fish in a huge dappled shell that is divided into square bosses. It is a strange creature, with a head like a tortoise and meek little helpless eyes. In a moment the man beats the shell in two with his flint mallet, and scoops out the flesh. Instinct teaches him to light a fire and prepare water. He makes of the sea-tortoise, a luscious soup that gives him new life. He falls asleep in the shadow of the crag, careless of friends or foes. A discharge of cannon awakes him. His subjects have rallied, driven away the enemy, and now they crown him king of the whole desert and lead him to his palace. That king's name was Nimrod, and the soup he invented was afterwards known as TURTLE. This man was perhaps a tyrant, but he was a benefactor of his species; therefore we would have his statue in a conspicuous place in the Crystal Palace and at Madame Tussaud's, and near him should rise the effigy of another immortal man, second to him only in fame—*the man who first ate an oyster.*

Seriously (for turtle soup is too sublime a thing to treat with levity) fishes, in the abstract, are rather "gruesome" and "ogglesome" things, and it must have required forti-

tude of a high order to have been the first to eat them. We do not know what Mr. Darwin supposes they develope into. Is it possible that a turtle ever becomes an alderman, or that cold-blooded friend of ours, the oyster, a Poor-law guardian? In a gazelle, a horse, a dog, there are lines of exquisite grace and symmetry; but a turbot is a most unclassical wretch, and a whale is swollen out of all drawing. There is no beauty in a jelly-fish, no contour in a haddock. The richest dyes and stains are lavished on millions of fish that never see man and never want to see him; but truly the beauty of form is for the most part denied those creatures. They seem like mere hints and sketches of future animals. As there is something of the goose in one of the antediluvian animals (near the Sydenham railway station), and something of the crocodile in the plesiosaurus, so there may be, in fish, the primary ideas of animals perfected in the sun or the moon, flourishing there even now, for all we know; and who is there to contradict us? It is probable enough that, protected from man and safe out of his way, primeval forms of life still exist among fish, while among animals they have passed away. The elk, the sabre-toothed tiger, the mammoth, have passed away; but there is no record of any fish ever mentioned in old times that is not still existing, except the kraken and the sea serpent; and we would not believe in them, even if we saw them. They have been seen, it is true; but only by captains of whalers after the fourth glass of rum-and-water. We do not know what Professor Owen will say to us, but we cannot help here remarking that even the skeleton of a fish seems rudimentary. Look at the turbot's bones; they merely form a sort of rough ladder. The gurnet is all head, the alligator all mouth, the whale all fat. Fish do not obey our laws of form; their beauty is a beauty allied to use, and has no affinity with human beauty.

But enough of the æsthetics of fish and their ignorance of the sublime and beautiful. The Greeks and Romans—epicures if there ever were epicures—held fish in great esteem; the worst of it is, that their fishes' names are so hopelessly untranslatable that the learning of those great compilers, Pliny and Athenæus, is from this cause all but useless to us. Out of some hundred species mentioned by Athenæus (in the reign of Diocletian, A.D. 288) our friend the learned Dreikopf of Jena could identify only some half dozen, and as for river and sea fish, they are mixed together by these omnivorous writers in the most hopeless way. The same confusion, however, Steinkopf of Leyden informs us, has befallen the Hebrew names of birds, beasts, fish and plants mentioned in the Bible, very few indeed of which are correctly rendered in the English. Archestratus praises the dog-fish boiled with cummin, and the same writer advises us to roast the pike, "the wisest of fish" as Aristophanes calls him, without scaling, but softened with salt and served up with brine. The great idea of putting a pudding in the river wolf's stomach had not yet been matured. "Let no Italians or Sicilians approach the pot," says Archestratus, "for they spoil fish by seasoning them with cheese too much vinegar and odious asafœtida." "Many seasoned dishes," says the practical poet, "they dress well enough, but they have no idea of cooking good fish in a plain honest way." Menander (in a passage quoted by Athenæus) talks of a tench that sold for nearly four drachmas (about three shillings of our money); now, the tench is a poor flabby mud fish, beautiful to look at in his olive-brown scales, but hardly worth the cooking. It appears that the tail of the sword-fish was good eating, and they ate also polypi, several sorts of sharks, and the inky cuttle-fish, supposed to be the chief ingredient in the black broth of the Spartans. Is it possible that the Greeks, the men who wrote the great plays and carved the unapproachable statues, were coarse feeders and ignorant of the laws of dining?

There are some good stories told of Greek and Roman epicures, proving them to have been true gourmets and epicures of fancy. Two epicures, Cindon and Demylus (says Aristodemus, a Greek ancestor of Joe Miller), were one day seated at table when a fine grayling was brought in and placed before them. Cindon, overcome by greediness, snatched at the eye of the fish; on seeing Cindon thus rudely stealing a march upon him, Demylus seized Cindon by the hair, and threatening fiercely to pluck out his eye, shouted:

"Let go that fish's eye, and I'll let go yours!"

And it is told of Zeno, the Stoic, that dining one day with a glutton, he snatched a huge fish off a dish as it entered the room, crying to the man: "Now you shall feel what those suffer daily who live with you."

It is not a bad thing (for a classic joke) which is told of Antagoras, the poet, and which bespeaks a fine instinct for cooking. Antagoras, having a bird to cook, refused to go to the bath, as usual, for fear, in his absence, the slaves should come and sop up the gravy. "Let your mother watch it," said his friend Philocydes, very naturally. "What?" replied this great creature—"what? Entrust the gravy of game to one's mother! The gods forbid!"

There is a pleasant tale told of a voracious Greek, who, seeing a fine fish set on table, tore off the top half, from head to tail, and devoured it before any one could be helped, exclaiming:

"This is the Helen of the feast, let me be the Paris!"

But enough of the Greeks; let us turn to the more expensive and equally vicious Romans. There is a Billingsgate tradition that a lobster was once sold for four guineas, and divided between two competing gourmets from the West-end; but Juvenal talks bitterly (in the satire that sent him to Upper Egypt) of a six-pound mullet fetching six thousand sesterces (about fifty pounds). That was in the reign of Domitian. And then comes the satirist's memorable scene about Domitian calling together the senate to discuss how an enormous turbot, just arrived from Ancona, was to be boiled: a story not dissimilar to one told of that

singularly detestable wretch Nero, who, in the very height of his last dangers, sent Liburnian heralds all through the city to summon the senate in order that he might inform them that he had made some improvements in the construction of organs. It was such monsters as these that used to throw their refractory slaves into the tanks in which they kept their lampreys.

Of fish in the middle ages we will not say much—partly from not knowing much about the subject. Those stalwart Norman kings were many of them gluttons. One of the Henrys died of a surfeit of lampreys (a favourite dish in Gloucestershire), and King John died of peaches and cyder. Queen Elizabeth ate porpoise and sturgeon (the last a yellow, meaty, cartilaginous fish of no great merit); but what could we expect of an old maid who drank ale for breakfast? William of Orange preserved our Protestantism from the Scarlet Lady; but he did more than that—he introduced Water Zoutchet, a most delicate Dutch way of serving boiled perch between bread and butter.

It is difficult to say what great mind invented whitebait, but it is not improbable that Shakespeare ate them, and that is a gratifying thing to reflect upon. Towards Blackwall, just where the river gets sufficiently impure to feed them, these delicious miniature fish move from April to August. They are mentioned, as early as 1612, as figuring honourably at the funeral feast of that wise and benevolent London merchant, Thomas Sutton, the founder of Charter House. This was in the reign of James the First, four years before the death of Shakespeare, and the year before the Globe Theatre was burnt down, the year that Henry the Eighth was acting, and the year before the New River was completed.

Every year these marvellous fish (an unclassified species) assemble under the very windows of the Trafalgar, waiting to be caught, as it were, and eager to be cooked. There is a rumour among icthyophagists that these little bits of silver, disgusted (like some of the corporation of London) at the great London drainage and modern improvement, talk of not coming up as far as Greenwich much longer.

Among the very few things we still covet in this mutable world there is one thing. *We want to be a Cabinet Minister.* The reader may naturally ask why. Is it in order to be badgered in the House by stultifying and criminating quotations from one's own bitter speeches? Is it in order to wear the ludicrous and uncomfortable Windsor uniform, so like the dress of a stage general or a court footman? Is it in order to be talked at, frowned at, snapped at, barked at, crowed at, brayed at? Is it in order to be held up to ridicule in ceaseless caricatures? Is it in order to double one's enemies and lose half one's friends? No, it is in order to enjoy the annual ministerial fish dinner, and to get whitebait served in the best style.

This historical dinner originated with a Scotch merchant, named Preston, who lived at Dagenham Reach, in Essex. He used to ask William Pitt down there, to rusticate and drink port wine with his favourite, George Rose, the Secretary of the Treasury. Pitt finding Essex inconvenient, the friends then took to meeting at Greenwich, and in course of time most of the other Tory ministers were invited, each paying for himself, but Sir Robert Preston contributing a buck and the champagne. On Sir Robert's death Mr. Long (afterwards Lord Farnborough) officially summoned the guests. The thirty-five or forty guests used originally to drop down the river in a gilt Ordnance barge.

Whitebait is now sent to London daily by railway; you see them in glittering silver heaps, like masses of card-table pearl fish, on the marble slabs of Bond-street and elsewhere. The fish is a coy fish and must be cooked on the spot, half an hour after coming from the net: otherwise they mat together like overdone sprats. Lifted out of the water on a skimmer, Dr. Pereira says they should be thrown upon a napkin covered with flour, and shaken. They are then put in a colander and the superfluous flour is sifted off. The fish are then dropped into a stew-pan of hot lard that is fizzling over a charcoal fire. They bathe there for two minutes, are then lifted out with a tin skimmer, thrown gently into a colander to drain, and served up crisp and perfect; at table you squeeze lemon-juice over them, and season them with cayenne pepper, and eat with slices of thin brown bread and butter, helping their descent with iced champagne.

That tasteful epicure, Mr. Walker (the Original), a worthy London police magistrate, who, believing that his skin had the peculiar power of resisting dirt, on principle never condescended to wash his face, allowed no meat but grouse to follow whitebait; but with the grouse he tolerated claret. He then permitted apple fritters and jelly, but no pastry; and ended with ices, a good dessert, coffee, and one glass of green chartreuse to each guest.

In one season, we are told, there have been sometimes sold in Billingsgate, in one day, one thousand tons of salmon. In one year there have been sold at the gate of King Belin, one million nine hundred and four thousand lobsters, and eighty-seven thousand nine hundred and fifty-six turbots. When we think of this, does not London appear like some huge Indian monster with millions of mouths perpetually devouring heaps of turbots, cart-loads of salmon, and tons of oysters?

Pic-nics are the most delightful of all outdoor entertainments, *if* the weather be fine; a pic-nic under umbrellas not being agreeable. But of all pic-nics, commend us to a fishing pic-nic, with a drive to the river in the sun, and a drive back in the moonlight. A pretty girl never (in our eyes) looks so pretty as when fishing. The sport admits of a thousand exquisite little coquetries. There is the terror at the bait; the uneasy meal worms, and the odious gentles. Then of course you have to help to put on the bait. You have to cheer, and to advise. There is a bite; then you have to assist to get into the boat a frightful and threatening perch with the trans-

parent orange back fin up; then get the hook out of the red leaves of his gills; then to put on more bait, and to pull on to another osier bed. Of all things in the world at a fishing pic-nic there is no enjoyment so great as cooking the fish on the river bank.

Get a kettle provided, put in it two parts cold water and one of white wine, a piece of butter, some stewed onions and carrots, two cloves, and a good bunch of sweet herbs; simmer a quarter of an hour; let it become cold; then prepare the fish (apart by the river side), and slip them into the water. When they boil, skim with the greatest care; when the water boils too hard, pour in a cup of cold water to check the extreme ebullition, and let the fish only simmer, lest the skin break before the flesh is done to the bone. If your trouts run large (so wise cooks say), they'll take ten minutes. If you want to know whether they are done, try with a knife; if the flesh divide easily from the bone, ready. The best cookery books advise us not to let the fish, when done, sodden in the water, but to lay them on the fish-plate across the kettle, covered with a thick cloth. Serve with anchovy sauce and a squeeze of lemon. By this dish the caterer will earn a reputation which he would never have approached by merely boiling his trout, and he will find that in after-times his pic-nic and his cooking will be ever "freshly remembered."

As many fish as St. Anthony preached his sermon to, crowd round us eager for notice. There is that ugly but delicious morsel, the John Dory (Jean Doré). Then, what surpasses a rosy, flaked, creamy slice out of a thick salmon? What a consistent fish a turbot is! In what snowy curls a whiting's flesh comes off the fried garland in which a good club cook so gracefully entwines him! If our reader has any wish to die a royal death, let him go to Worcester and eat lampreys as they stew them there in madeira, and served with sippets of bread and horse-radish. Any reader who wants to combine a country tour with real pleasure should go to Gloucestershire, and spend a day in the Golden valley in the neighbourhood of Stroud. There in the pebbly brooks that "make sweet music o'er th' enamelled stones," under the light green boughs of beech and ash, he will find a nimble and artful race of delicious crawfish that in thunderstorms have a habit of dying and turning suddenly scarlet as if boiled by the fever of a sudden fright. Chase the little artful scoundrels from stone to stone and fill your creel with their scratching, wriggling, indigo carcasses. Then tire yourself with a long hearty walk, and return to boil your prey for supper. Those crawfish will endear Gloucestershire to you for ever.

Wordsworth obtained his noblest ideas (as is well known to psychologists), entirely from his refined diet. He wrote his Ode to Immortality after a dinner of char from Windermere. Potted char is one of the most sumptuous of all potted things. Even the shallow white pot with the painted char on its sides is appetising.

We must be pardoned after discussing this royal dish, not to be fully enjoyed away from the lake scenery, for referring to that savoury but humble fish, the sprat. How different from his noble cousin the whitebait, yet how friendly to man, when served hot and smoking from an adjacent gridiron! How pretty the little martyrs look, their silver-foil skins scorched brown in parts, and branded with ruled lines where the gridiron has impinged upon them! If it were not for the extreme pleasure of eating them, bones and all, we could look at them a whole day.

Stewing, in our opinion, is the worst way of cooking fish. Stewing is like potting; it reduces everything to one dead monotony of taste. A stew is what its gravy chooses to make it, and potted fish is whatever its spice is. The poorer the fish, the richer the sauce. That is why people take that muddy mass, the Prussian carp, and soak him in port wine and beef gravy. He is not worth the trouble or the cost. He is ungrateful, and will not repay the cook.

CRÉDIT MOBILIER IN DISCREDIT.

"Qui vivra verra." You have only to continue in life to see strange things. More than ten years ago, in Household Words, January 3, 1857, we gave a few utterances respecting that mysterious monster the Crédit Mobilier, then juvenile and strong as a giant who needs no refreshment. It had been founded little more than five years previously, by a Jew, M. Emile Pereire, assisted by his brother Isaac. Those gentlemen possessed small means, beyond a good education and a clever head. Our utterances were to the effect that, whatever confidence other people might have in Crédit Mobilier, we had no intention of entrusting our own private fortune to its keeeping. Indeed, it needed small acumen to perceive that the purchasers and holders of shares, which had risen from twenty pounds (with only eight pounds paid down on them at first) to sixty, seventy, and eighty pounds per share, were very like acrobats balancing obelisks of Luxor and Cleopatra's needles on the tips of their chins. It was pretty to behold, but much too fine a sight to last.

Since then, changes have come to pass, some of which, though episodic, belong to the action of the tale. We say nothing of the shares going down to twelve pounds and less, because that was in the natural course of things.

Most people have heard of M. Mirès, the great financier, in his splendour when he got a high-born prince for his son-in-law, and who afterwards—what a fall was there!—learnt the effect of four walls on personal liberty. Unlike the Pereires, Mirès had, probably, no more education than he could pick up while selling sealing-wax sticks in French provincial towns. Per contra, he had a head and a will, of which he is still making efficient use.

Three antagonistic Israelite houses have sufficed, by their perturbing forces, to cause cataclysms in the financial world. The mone-

tary tide rises and falls. Spring and neap, in the oscillations of the ocean, are mere ripples beside the earthquake waves by which the Bourse has alternately been flooded and left dry. If the mutual attractions of the sun, moon, and earth, be the main cause of disturbance in our seas, the repulsions of Rothschild, Pereire, and Mirès, shake the domains of Plutus to their centre.

The Rothschilds may be admitted to have their dwelling in a safe and solid banking house. It is sound and massive, of the Tuscan order of architecture. The Rothschilds are too unshakeable in their position to trouble themselves about quarrelling with their neighbours. Mirès, shall we say, has inhabited an establishment in the clouds, a castle in the air, a château in Spain, an exchange built on the top of a beanstalk? The Pereires are middlemen, or a mean by no means happy, between the two, with a preference for the composite order (richly furnished and well stocked with wines), putting their trust in a foundation, partly aërial partly terrestrial, with one foot on the sea and one on shore. Surely, Blondin is safe on his rope, so long as he neither trip nor lose his balance. Surely Leotard is as secure as a bird in the air, *if* the trapeze he wants to grasp, be within his reach. The Pereires have had a pretty quarrel with Mirès, in which the latter received not a few hard hits. But he has more lives than a cat, and will neither hang, nor drown, nor make away with himself, to suit their convenience. Mirès, in fact, is just now swimming on the surface, in spite of the stones that have been tied round his neck. He may even one day make his landing good, to illustrate the wisdom of never saying die.

During the palmy days of Crédit Mobilier, also while Mirès was blazing in his zenith, there flourished an individual who called himself Eugène de Mirecourt—a nom de plume. He really had no "de" belonging to him, but was plain Eugène Jacquot, born in 1812 at Mirecourt. This person, once a schoolmaster, obtained notoriety and a livelihood, by writing small biographies, sold for half a franc, with portrait, autograph, and anecdotes (whether scandalous or not, it little mattered) of no matter whom—artistical, political, theatrical, literary, male or female, Jew or Gentile—provided their lives were likely to interest public curiosity. It is obvious that this form of contemporary history is of all others open to abuses—that it affords opportunities of gratifying envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness—not to mention extortion of money by threats. But even without the guilt of premeditated calumny, it is no very delicate task to worm out the details of private life, in order to sell them for half-franc pieces. Nor are Jacquot's biographies at all forbearing in their tone. It is possible that, had they been so, they would not have sold so largely.

Jacquot, consequently, was often in hot water; however, so long as the pot boiled, he did not mind a few scalds. In an evil hour, some demon tempted him to stick Mirès the Jew in his collection. But Mirès was not a butterfly to be pinned down quietly in an entomologist's drawer; he proved a hornet who savagely turned tail and stung the enterprising naturalist's fingers. Whether Jacquot undertook the capture of the Mirès specimen, through the suggestion of his own unassisted folly, or whether he was set on to do it by others, is best known to Jacquot himself. Certain is it that his description and criticism of the Mirèsian system of finance did not at all please the party criticised. Law proceedings were initiated; the innocent Jacquot was given to understand that he might not slash right and left with his pen; that libel is not yet legalised in France, where truth cannot even be pleaded in its justification. Mirès was triumphant. He not only closed Jacquot's mouth, but shut up his body in prison, and, what was more, put a stop to his career as contemporary biographer.

On leaving prison, Eugène Jacquot, alias De Mirecourt, dived, as Carlyle says, beyond soundings. When he did at length turn up, it was somewhere in Russia; but Mirès had extinguished him for ever. When we last heard of him, it was as humble assistant in some extra-pious publication.

Still, if revenge be sweet, Jacquot's mouth has since been filled with sugar-candy. Mirès put Jacquot in prison; Mirès has been put in prison. The offended Jew persecuted the offending Christian; the offending Jew has been persecuted and ruined—not by a Christian, but by men of his own faith, the Brothers Pereire. If Jacquot ever regarded Mirès with bitter feelings, Jacquot may rest satisfied that his deadly enemy had also had to pass through *his* retributive ordeal.

And now the parts are reversed again. It is the turn of Mirès to scourge his scourgers; and scourge them he does with hearty good will. The case, simply stated, is this. Some two years ago, the Crédit Mobilier doubled its capital by the emission of shares, which shares have received no dividend. The new shareholders consequently brought an action against the administrators who issued the new shares, the result of which is, that they (the issuers) have been sentenced to pay back the money received. The special instance tried and decided, settles the validity of other claims. On the 4th of May last, the Tribunal of Commerce of the Seine (that is, of Paris), for reasons then given, but too lengthy to reproduce here, "Declared null and void the extraordinary general meetings of the 12th of February and the 1st of March, 1866; consequently declared of no effect the resolutions voted by those two meetings; consequently pronounced the defendants to be responsible for the emission of the hundred and twenty thousand new shares; consequently condemns E. Pereire, I. Pereire, Michel Chevalier, Salvador, Renouard de Bussière, Galliera, Biesta, Greininger, and Sellière, to pay to the plaintiff five thousand one hundred and sixty-six francs fifty centimes, with interest according to law, on presentation of the ten shares in question; condemns, moreover, the defendants to all the law expenses."

This judgment of the Tribunal of Commerce will be appealed against, and the appeal is likely to come off towards the close of June. Supposing it to be rejected, as justice and common sense would indicate, every other holder of the last issued shares will make the same claims on the administrators. It was expected that the administrators *would* appeal; and yet one asks on what grounds the judgment, which has reached them, can possibly be reversed. They have only one hope left to cling to.

They maintained before the Tribunal of Commerce, that the Council of State, by approving their deliberations, sanctioned their meetings, and that the Emperor's decree covers all. This pretension will doubtless be reproduced before the court—with small chance of success, because the tribunal has already replied to it in the following terms:

"There is no ground for inquiring whether the attention of the Council of State was directed to the veritable situation of the society and the regularity of its deliberations, since any examination it might make could not prejudice the rights of third parties. Consequently, it remains not the less certain that the appreciation of the said deliberations, whether concerning their form or their principle, continues completely within the domain of the Tribunal of Commerce."

Independent of this "considerant," we may recal to mind under the influence of what pressure the Council of State granted its authorisation.

The acting directors of the Crédit Mobilier, after obtaining from the Crédit Foncier an assistance of thirty millions and the support of the Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations, declared that, *by doubling the capital of the Crédit Mobilier, all embarrassment would be removed, and the societies definitely saved from ruin.* If, in order to protect the interests mixed up with the Crédit Mobilier, the authorisation to double its capital were necessary, state reasons justified the concession. But if, on the contrary, the support solicited was only a lure—if the end in view was a compromising of the state, with the intention of converting it into a weapon—the success of such a step, far from being an excuse, deserves the severest censure. Such an intention would be not merely ingratitude, but a flagrant blunder; because it would place the government in the necessity of making known the declarations under the influence of which the doubling of the capital was accorded.

It is evident that the judgment pronounced by the Tribunal of Commerce, in the matter of the Crédit Mobilier, is of great importance, because it establishes the *responsibility* of the administrators. Directors are taught that they cannot do exactly as they please, and cannot then defy the shareholders to touch them. It is also a most praiseworthy instance of a decision arrived at without needless delay. The Tribunal contrived to hear the pleadings, and to make up its mind, in *two* sittings only. Nevertheless, the interests involved were enormous; the principle contended for, full of weighty consequences.

It will be believed that not the feeblest hits at the administrators of the Crédit Mobilier, *i.e.*, at the Brothers Pereire, are those given by M. Mirès. He professes to wish to ease their fall. He urges them to avoid further exposure, and to compromise the matter; that is, to refund. He is astonished that men reputed intelligent should do nothing to stop the rising wave which threatens soon to overwhelm them. What can their further fall signify *to him?* What he wished for, he has obtained; they have been judged, and found wanting. The (im) morality of *their* transactions has been made as evident as the loyalty of his own.

They reckon on the public services they have rendered, and thereupon build their hopes of immunity. According to their accounts, their conduct has always been absolutely disinterested; the public welfare was their only thought. With incredible simplicity, they exclaim, "After what we have done for the national weal, is it possible that we should be thrown overboard!" Forgetting their business-monopoly for fifteen years, exercised with no merciful hand; forgetting their abuses and infractions of the law (in the case of numerous "syndicats"—combinations to bring about a rise or fall in the price of shares), they have the face to say, "It is the affair of the ports of Marseilles which has let us down!"

Nothing of the kind is true. If they hope to meet with justice tempered with mercy, let them acknowledge their errors or their faults. To repair the evils they have caused, let them sacrifice their ill-gotten wealth. At that price, they may still retain some little remnant of respectability. But, if they insist on their shareholders' ruin, if they be determined to keep their money at the expense of their honesty, they will have to undergo the fate of other less culpable financiers, who have had to suffer for their doings.

M. Mirès, therefore (in "La Presse," which is his property) is making charitable and persevering efforts to prevent the explosion of the innumerable lawsuits which, like the showers of shooting stars at their stated epochs, threaten to set the financial firmament in a blaze. If discontented shareholders cannot be persuaded to refrain, the administrators of the Crédit Mobilier will be in the position of a target for chassepot practice. Not that he feels much pity for them individually. But his great fear is, that if saucy shareholders be thus allowed to get into a habit of persecuting directors, there will be an end of all association and enterprise for the carrying out of great undertakings. He is afraid that the character, the notoriety, and the consequences, of these lawsuits, will cause respectable, able, and wealthy men to keep aloof from grand industrial schemes: which schemes must consequently languish and fall to the ground. He would like "a conclusion," a shutting up of the business, *without* judicial debates. It would be much better, he thinks, for things to be made pleasant, than to go on raising more and more fuss, more and more scandal. There has already been too much of both.

Security for the administrators first; then, an equitable satisfaction offered to the suffering interests. In governmental regions there exists a strong repugnance to exert heavy pressure on the administrators—of which repugnance the said administrators are well aware. Perhaps even they mistake it for friendly patronage. But, to forestall the issue of the threatened lawsuits and the influence of public opinion, M. Mirès strongly advises them—and notably the MM. Periere, Galliera, and Sellière—to accept the proposition of a Tribunal of Arbitration composed of "sommités sociales," people high in society, as the surest way of saving their honour, instead of risking continued judicial proceedings, in which their reputations may receive unseemly gashes. "At any price, avoid future lawsuits," is the serious advice of M. Mirès. If they refuse it the public will believe, not that their hands are perfectly clean, but that, in risking such a stake, the administrators are influenced by some secret assurance of gaining their suit.

But those gentlemen must have forgotten that the day is past when judges delivered their sentences "according to the facts of the case" without further explanation. At that time, the motives of judgments remained unknown. At present, the magistrates, being obliged to give reasons for their decisions, are under the control of public opinion. Managers, possessed of royal fortunes, can hardly expect a favourable decision when sued by their ruined constituents; especially as those fortunes were acquired during the period in which the ruin of the shareholders was accomplished. This idea is strongly supported by the adverse judgment against the administrators already delivered by their peers—the judges of the Tribunal of Commerce.

M. Mirès boldly shows up the fortune accumulated by the Brothers Pereire, Emile and Isaac, during their management of the Crédit Mobilier. In 1848, they were in very embarrassed circumstances, which continued with such intensity that, in 1852, for want of five hundred thousand francs (twenty thousand pounds), the amount of caution money required, they could not be comprised on the list of concessionaires of the railway from Paris to Lyons. In 1854, they were still what is called poor. They inhabited apartments in the Rue d'Amsterdam, the property of the Sainte-Germain railway; their whole fortune then consisting of the founders' shares in the said railway.

At present they possess, lands stretching from the Parc de Monceaux and the Boulevard Malesherbes up to Batignolles, worth thirty-five millions; buildings erected on the same for the private account of the Messieurs Pereire, ten millions; the forest of Armauvillers and the château they have built there, ten millions; their hôtel in the Rue du Faubourg St. Honoré, six millions; their other hôtel in the Rue de Valois, one million; the château de Palmer (famous claret vineyard), in the Gironde, two millions; Arcachon (fashionable and much frequented watering-place near Bordeaux), six millions; estates along the railway from Bordeaux to Bayonne, reached by agricultural roads made at the expense of the State, ten millions. Total of "propriétés immobilières" property in land and houses, eighty millions of francs, or three millions two hundred thousand pounds sterling.

Moreover, numerous commercial companies are cited as having been established with their capital, such as the "Magasins du Louvre," the "Grande Maison de Blanc," the manufactory of "Conserves Alimentaires," &c. All those are what are called "Valeurs mobilières," property belonging to the cash-box. To give an idea of the immense amount of this "mobilier" wealth, some years ago, M. Emile Pereire, at a meeting of the shareholders of "l'Immobilière," said that he and his brother held between them more shares than all the other shareholders put together. Consequently, it is a very moderate estimate to put down their mobilier property at the modest sum of thirty millions, making a grand total of one hundred and ten millions of francs, or four million four hundred thousand pounds sterling.

This wealth (in no way patrimonial) has not come to them either by inheritance or through their wives. When the Messieurs Pereire came to Paris, they were not a bit better off than M. Mirès was. In short, they sprang from nothing. All they possess must have been acquired during their direction of the Crédit Mobilier. When a man produces nothing, but merely buys and sells, it is clear that, to fill *his* pockets, other people's must be emptied.

The disasters caused by the collapse of the Crédit Mobilier are said to have been nearly as terrible as the ruin brought about by the Assignats of '93. Innumerable are the individuals who have had to learn the difference between affluence and indigence. Behind these trials, pending or expected, more than thirty thousand families are anxiously awaiting the issue. Small to them is the consolation that, if the Crédit Mobilier (although professedly established for the development of national industry) have done no good to itself, it has at least done good — as far as filling their pockets is concerned—to the Brothers Pereire, Emile and Isaac.

VIGILANCE IN THE FAR WEST.

Far West in the United States, among the cañons and gulches of the Rocky Mountains, and in that part of their line which supplies the headwaters of the Missouri, the gold-diggers have formed a community too young for recognition upon any map published in England. Notwithstanding the neglect of our geographers, a book printed in one of their own towns describes this region as "the world-renowned country, now the territory of Montana." It has a city of Bannack—named from the Bannack Indians—and a city of Virginia, which was to have been called Varina, after Mrs. Jefferson Davis; but the first judge who was asked to head a document with that address said he would see them all——Well, never mind—and

wrote Virginia. The manner of the occupation of this region—which lies rather more than three hundred miles to the north of the Great Salt Lake, in Utah—is as follows: Six years ago there was a stampede from the surrounding territories towards Salmon River. That river rises near to the main source of the Missouri, but runs down the other side of the Rocky Mountains into Snake River, and so to the Columbia, so to the Pacific. Many came down from Utah by the upper course of Snake River, and, when they learnt that the diggings upon Salmon River were too crowded, turned aside in search of any other diggings whereof prospecters gave good account. Some, looking for the old trail from Salt Lake, settled in Grasshopper Creek, and formed what were called, from the shape of a rock in the river there, the Beaver Head diggings. Explorers from this settlement first worked the gulches east of the Rocky Mountains, in the territory now known as Montana. These were joined by others from Minnesota and Salt Lake, who arrived during the winter—an unusually open one—of the year 'sixty-two. Even from Utah few came who were saints, and the temptation of rich gold-fields in the wild mountain land, beyond reach of the law, attracted many a desperate ruffian who had played out his game of robbery and murder in the mines on the (not very) Pacific side of the mountains.

Montana has now a newspaper and "the latest improved power-presses." Affidavits are made, and "ladies', misses', boys', and children's shoes, balmorals, and gaiters" are retailed where, a few years ago, the desert cliffs and mountain gorges tried the pluck of a Fremont. As before said, one book at least has been printed and published in Virginia City, "forming," as its green cover tells, "the only reliable work ever offered to the public by Professor Thomas J. Dimsdale." No, that assertion is too limited; we have omitted a full stop. It is "the only reliable work ever offered to the public." We may call it a History of the Middle Ages in Montana. Affairs of six years ago are Ancient History in the Far West. This is a record of mediæval lawlessness and rapine, to which the author looks back from comparatively tranquil times, telling us how some wild incident in the history of Montana happened on the spot where such a street or Who and Which's store stands, recording, with a due reverence for old memorials, that in such a ravine may yet be seen the tree upon which some robber chief was hanged. He notes even that a sign-post, marked with bullet-holes made in it by formidable thieves and murderers, who used to shoot at it with their revolvers, is actually standing at the present time. This clear and broad line of division between past and present is a very noticeable feature of the book. It is a true line of division. It is true that the work of many generations has been done in a few months, and how? Not by applying forms of law in a community for which written law is a dead letter, but by maintaining right with the strong hands of honest men against the brute force of rascality.

Mr. Dimsdale undertook to furnish readers in the new settlement with an exact account of this struggle between the friends of order, represented by "the Vigilantes of Montana," and the criminal disorder, which had its chief support in "the Road Agent band." Road Agent is the polite name in the Rocky Mountains for a highwayman. The narrative deals with the most vital of all earthly questions to the men for whom it was compiled, and a matter also of no little interest to us of the old communities. We get from it a clear sense of the meaning of those Western Vigilance Committees who make right respected where law goes for nothing. Much steadiness is not to be looked for in the more settled part of a community established by the rush of rough adventurers into a desert said to contain gold. Traders and plunderers attend upon the shifting camp. The traders who supply the diggers' wants would make sure profit if the roads were safe. They may be credited, therefore, with a keen sense of the worth of order. But, on their part, the plunderers know the worth of a safe well-stocked hunting-ground. Before the Vigilantes took Montana in hand, "shooting scrapes" were almost as common as disputes. Public opinion contemned mean theft, but supported the retort by bullet for a very light offence. Thus, a man would object to be sworn at, although every sentence of his own came up smothered in oaths as a rabbit in onions. But it is on record that, with all its wildness, those of the few women in the place who lived good lives were reverenced and worshipped by the whole community. The roughest and worst men were as ready as the best to be their champions. All women had power over them; a good woman power almost unlimited. She was Una in the wood, "whom salvage nation does adore."

Not long after the establishing of the new settlement, its rascality was organised by a man of smooth manners and insinuating address. "A perfect gentleman," some sympathisers called him, when they could not help admitting that he was, at the same time, thief and assassin. The name of this gentleman, who, for the safe management of his road agency, obtained the post of sheriff—was Henry Plummer. Mr. Sheriff Plummer had gone to California in 'fifty-two, and was Marshal of Nevada when he murdered a German in cold blood under circumstances adding greatly to the foulness of the crime. On the ground that he was consumptive, and that prison air did not agree with his constitution, Plummer was pardoned, a few months after his sentence. He then went back to Nevada; became a partner in the "Lafayette Bakery;" was defeated in a plot to get the post of city marshal; killed another man; went to Washoe; joined a band of highwaymen; attacked a bullion express; was tried for this and acquitted; went back to Nevada; killed another man; was again put into gaol; by connivance of his gaoler came out in open daylight, with a loaded pistol in each hand, and started for Oregon with a gentleman who had just put his knife into the heart of the Nevada sheriff.

Riding a stolen horse, and committing another murder in the course of his travels, this perfect gentleman found his way to Montana, and obtained in the new settlement the office of sheriff, charging himself, as a Jonathan Wild of the West, with the duties of thief-catcher.

Plummer found his way to Bannack with an old acquaintance, one Jack Cleveland, just after the discovery of the gold there. Its discoverer, "together with Rodolph Dorsett, was murdered by Charley Kelly." In the winter of eighteen sixty-two, 'three, the fame of Bannack was spread widely. It was the first mining camp of any importance established on the east of the Rocky Mountains, and by the spring of eighteen 'sixty-three there were a thousand people in it; including nearly all the ruffians who had played their game out in the older settlements. Of these Henry Plummer was the master spirit. His friend, Jack Cleveland, who murdered a man on his way in, often said when drunk that Plummer was "his meat." He gave himself, among the roughs in the new camp, airs of a chief. One day when he was thus bragging in a saloon, Plummer said, with the customary garnish, "I am tired of this," and began firing at him. When wounded he fell to his knees, wildly grasping at his pistol, and said, "Plummer, you won't shoot me when I'm down." His messmate replied, "No, get up," and as he staggered to his feet, continued shooting till he killed him. A man was at the time being shaved in the saloon, and "shooting scrapes" were so much matters of course, that the man who was being shaved sat still in his chair, and the barber went on with his shaving. Another shooting scrape. George Ives, who afterwards distinguished himself as a road agent, or highwayman, talked in the street with his friend George Carrhart, and, disliking his conversation, said, in the usual emphatic style, "I'll shoot you." As they did not happen to have revolvers in their pockets, Ives stepped into a grocery store to get one, while Carrhart went for his into his own cabin. The friends fired at each other without effect till there remained only one shot, and that was in the sixth barrel of Carrhart's revolver, which accordingly he fired into his friend's back. Ives staggered towards the shop for another loaded pistol, but his friend made off. These gentlemen having recovered their tempers, lived together as messmates during the rest of the winter. But, after all, Carrhart's death came of a shooting scrape. Two gentlemen in a saloon having quarrelled over a game of poker, began firing at one another, and when they had emptied their revolvers were unhurt. But it was found that "Buz Cavan's dog, Toodles," which was under the table, had three balls in his body, and that George Carrhart, who had been asleep on a bench, had been accidentally shot through the bowels.

Haze Lyons, afterwards an eminent road agent, owed three or four hundred dollars, as a board bill, to a citizen of Bannack. One morning when he was known to have won a great deal of money at the gambling table over night, he was asked for the money; but his creditor was told, emphatically, "If you ask me for that again, I'll make it unhealthy for you." Buck Stinson, who also distinguished himself as a road agent, owed some money to a man, whom he saw chiding his boy for a fault. He interfered at once, and when he was told that it was a duty to see that the boy did not go wrong, this moralist thrust his revolver at his creditor's face and saying, "I don't like you, anyhow," would have fired if he had not been baulked by the ensuing struggle. Now, when Plummer was "honourably acquitted" of the murder of his friend Cleveland, because Cleveland's language had been irritating; and when a certain Charley Reeves and Bill Moore had been found guilty of firing into an adjacent camp of friendly Indians for the pleasure of killing natives, and, by eleven to one, the jury had decided against punishment of death; the desperadoes of the camp began to feel and make themselves at home. It was a common thing for two men, one a ruffian and one a fair supporter of order, to come to a clear understanding that one had to kill the other as soon as, in mountain phrase, he could "get the drop on him." Men received visitors with the distinct knowledge that they came to commit murder, if they could pull out a revolver fast enough to take their victim unawares. They knew that they were watched for in the streets, and that sometimes a room might be taken in the opposite house from which to shoot them as they sat at their own doors.

But such plots, in the braggart air of the mining camp, were never secret. On each side there would be a dozen men aiding, abetting, cautioning and watching for the stealthy issue of the open feud. The result of a tedious stalking of each other by Henry Plummer and one Hank Crawford, an honest man, was that Plummer was shot in the right arm, the ball lodging in the wrist joint, where it was found after his death, brightened by constant friction, and spoiling the use of his pistol hand, with which he had been an unerring marksman. By constant practice he became a good left-handed shot, but never regained his old character for deadly precision. What are men to do who are thus planted in an out-post of civilisation, gathered there in accordance with natural laws, but having little help of any other laws to aid them in contest with the worst difficulty of their situation, the overpowering temptation offered by it to the wildest Ishmaels of the continent? In Montana, law was tried and failed. The one man of the jury who dared to vote sentence of death against the murderers of friendly Indians was himself notoriously marked out for assassination. He saved his life for a time by constant watchfulness, pulling out his bowie knife and picking up a stick to whittle, if he met Plummer in the street, and a few months afterwards he left Montana. When he left an attack on his party was planned by the road agents, with Mr. Plummer at their head; but that also was foiled. In attacks upon the coaches and other convoys of treasure and

merchandise, the road agents were masked, and their first cry to the attacked was "Up with your hands!" Whoever did not hold up his hands and keep them up during the plundering, was shot by those of the attacking party who had their guns or revolvers levelled for that purpose. Road Agency spies and accomplices were every where. Sometimes the driver of the coach was an accomplice, and there was a private mark set, when it started, upon any coach that carried money.

Not only had Plummer, the chief organiser of this Road Agency, procured his own election as sheriff of Bannack, and that in spite of his known character, but he had appointed two of his accomplices as sheriff's deputies. He then informed an honest man who had been chosen sheriff of Virginia city that he would live the longer if he resigned that office in his favour. Fear of assassination tempted him to do so, and thus Plummer and his robber deputies took charge of the execution of the law in both places at once, and had the people of Montana in their power. One of the sheriff's deputies was not a thief, and as he knew too much, sentence of death was passed upon him by his comrades. He was shot openly and publicly by three of the road agents, who were taken red handed and brought to trial in a people's court—found guilty, condemned to death, and then set free by a popular vote, with great enthusiasm, because a number of the ladies came upon the scene, shed tears, and begged earnestly "to save the poor boys' lives." After this further failure of justice there was no more security for property or life. Men dared not go outside Virginia after dark. Men dared not risk their lives by telling who had robbed or maimed them on the highway. Dastardly murders occurred almost every day; many feared even to lift the head of a man lying wounded in the street, lest he should whisper to them the name of his assassin, and they should themselves be marked for the list of the dead men who tell no tales. A man whipped for larceny, to escape the sting of the lash, offered to tell what he knew of the road agents. George Ives met this man by day, on a frequented road, within sight of two houses and three or four passing teams, shot him, and when he fell dead from his horse took the horse by the bridle and walked off with it to the mountains. A Dutchman had sold some mules, was paid for them in advance, and went to the ranch where they were kept to bring them to their purchasers. On his way back he was murdered by George Ives, who took money and mules, and dragged the dead body aside into the sage bush. This brings us to the turning point in the story.

One William Palmer, some time afterwards, was walking ahead of his waggon, gun in hand; a grouse rose in front of him; he fired, and the bird dropped into the sage bush on the body of the murdered man. That roadside shot at a grouse was the best shot ever fired in Montana. The sight of the stiff frozen corpse thus strangely discovered and brought to town in a cart, stirred men's blood. Three or four men raised a party of some two dozen determined citizens, who rode out, long after nightfall, to track down the murderer. Falling, horses and men, through the ice of a creek they were riding over, they went on through the dark night among the mountains in their frozen clothes, surprised accomplices of the road agents, who lived close by the scene of the murder, obtained their unwilling confession that George Ives was the assassin, took presently Ives himself. By the next evening, they had brought him back a prisoner into Nevada city, having spent two hours on the way in chase of him when he attempted flight. His captors guarded him through the night, and protected, next day, judge and jury in the execution of their duty. The bench was a waggon; the jury sat by the camp-fire; the newly roused asserters of law and order stood around, revolvers in hand, with their eyes upon the desperadoes, who were ready to support, aid, and, if possible, rescue by force their endangered friend. Counsel was heard on both sides; witnesses proved that the prisoner was guilty of more than one robbery and murder. He was condemned to death, and the supporters of order, repressing every attempt at rescue, setting aside every evasion, held their ground with revolvers cocked and lifted to their breasts. Thus, on a moonlight night, among the discordant shouts and threats of opposing opinion, Ives was hanged from a pole, planted for the purpose against the wall of an unfinished house.

Immediately afterwards there was organised by five bold men in Virginia and one in Nevada, the secret league of the Vigilantes, who opposed on the side of the law, force to force, and fear to fear, against the organisation of the road agents. The Vigilance Committee soon became as terrible to the rogues as the Road Agency had been to honest men. Sheriff Plummer himself was seized, before he could escape, and hanged, together with his two ruffianly sheriffs' deputies, on a Sunday evening. The Vigilantes took upon themselves as captors, judges, and executioners, thus to put an end to the long reign of terror. One criminal taken by the mob, had a hundred shots fired at him while he was hanging; the crowd began firing so soon that the executioner had to shout to them, "I say, boys, stop shooting a minute." When all was done they hauled the desperado's body down and burnt it in the cabin he had occupied. Next day there were people panning his ashes to see whether there had been any gold about him. But the Vigilantes were guilty of no such excesses. They sought to strike terror into the criminals who had defied the weak arm of the law by sure and secret punishment of guilt. In no case was a man hanged without evidence.

"You have done right. Not an innocent man hanged yet," said one of the last of their condemned. Of some whom they condemned they might, in another state of society, have saved the lives; but their purpose was that for mortal offences death should be the certain penalty. Sometimes there would be kindly intercourse with the condemned man, expressed

understanding on both sides that, if the work they had undertaken was to be done, once for all, faithfully and thoroughly, there must be no half measures, no reprieve. Others died as they lived. One, waiting his turn, looked at the quivering body of a comrade, saying, "Kick away, old fellow, I'll be in hell with you in a minute." Another in his death-struggle went through the movements of drawing a revolver from his belt, cocking it, and firing its six barrels; even the last convulsions of the hand repeating the act most familiar to his life of rapine.

The body of such a man found hanging on a tree in the morning with a label fastened to his clothes, stating his name and crime, and that he was hanged, "By Order of the Vigilantes," showed that during the night these resolved friends of order had been afoot. "You have treated me like a gentleman," said one of the captured men, commonly known as "Red," "and I know I am going to die—I am going to hanged." "Indeed," said his jailer, "that's pretty rough." "It *is* pretty rough," said Red, "but I deserved this, years ago. What I want to say is that I know all about the gang, and there are men in it who deserve this more than I do; but I should die happy if I could see them hanged, or know that it would be done. I don't say this to get off. I don't want to get off."

He was told that he had better disclose what he knew, for the sake of his neighbours. Times had been very hard, and "you know, Red," said the Vigilant, "that we have been shot down in broad daylight—not for money, or even for hatred, but for luck, and it must be put a stop to." Red agreed to this, and his confessions gave the fullest account obtained from any one, of all the mysteries of the road agents; they had a particular way of shaving, a particular tie to their necks, and their password was "Innocent."

How the Vigilantes of the Rocky Mountains went about their duty, we shall understand well enough if we take a single arrest for example. Let it be that of the gentleman—Bill Hunter—whose death-struggle showed how familiar his hand had been with the instrument of murder. Four of the Vigilantes volunteered to arrest him. They had far to go; forded a river in which flakes of ice swirled down on the flanks of the horses; camped on the frozen earth upon its banks; and slept under their blankets by the fire they built. One who slept on a hillock with his feet to the fire, slid into it, and was startled out of sleep by heat; another went to bed in mammoth socks, and, feeling the frost, pushed downward as he slept to get his feet well into them, and so worked himself out at the bottom of his blanket to be wakened by the cold. Next day their way was through a snowstorm, but they welcomed this as an ally. At two in the afternoon they came to a ranch twenty miles from their destination, supped there, went on at dark, and reached at midnight the cabin in which they expected to take their prisoner. They halted, unsaddled, and rapped loudly at the door. "Good evening," they said to a man who opened it. "Don't know whether it is or not," was the reply. They were admitted, and found in the cabin three persons—two visible, one covered up in bed. The Vigilantes, who talked of gold and prospecting, as if they were travelling miners, placed themselves, very obviously well armed, to sleep against each possible place of exit—including the chimney—and said nothing of their real business until far into the morning of the next day, when the horses were saddled, and they seemed to be on the point of continuing their journey. Then one of them asked who the sleeper was, who had never waked or uncovered his face? The host said he did not know. He was a stranger who had been there since the beginning of the snowstorm. He was asked to describe him, and described the person of Bill Hunter.

The Vigilantes then went to the bed, and one of them laid a firm hand over the sleeper's breast, gripping the revolver then held by the sleeper under the bedclothes. "Bill Hunter" was called for, and on looking up saw stern men with guns levelled at him. He asked to be taken to Virginia city; but when he came out he knew that a shorter journey was before him, for he was put on a horse of which the rider followed him on foot, and he was not himself suffered to take the bridle. Thus he was escorted for two miles until they reached a tree with a branch convenient for throwing a rope over, and a spur to which the end of the rope could be fastened. There they paused, scraped away a foot of snow, lit a camp-fire and breakfasted. After breakfast there was consultation and a vote. It was decided not to take the prisoner to Virginia city. He became pale and faint, and asked for water. The catalogue of his known crimes was recited to him. He denied none of them, and only asked that his friends should not know the manner of his death. So he was hanged; and every one who was present saw that as he died, "he reached as if for his pistol, and went through the pantomime of cocking and discharging his revolver six times." Bill Hunter was the last of the old road-agent band, executed by the Vigilance committee.

The Vigilantes withdrew from their work and trusted in the reviving power of the law. One man—influential and popular when sober, reckless and dangerous when drunk, defied the law, and put men's lives in danger. After a night of violence, when arrested by the sheriff he tore up the writ and he and his comrades drew their revolvers. The sheriff retired. War against just authority was thus again declared. The Vigilantes stepped in again for the support of law and order; took the man, popular as he was, and much as they liked him; condemned him to death—one of them even with tears of compassion—and firmly resolute to their purpose, hanged him also on a tree. No more was required. The ruffians left Montana and the bullies spoke with bated breath; honest men walked free, life and property were secure, trade flourished and law was respected. The foundations of a civilised community were firmly laid, and this by acts in themselves lawless.

By the light of this record of successful action among the Vigilantes of Montana, we may interpret much of the rude justice that seems sometimes to discredit pioneers of the Far West. As to essentials of character, men of the same race are everywhere pretty much alike, however they may differ in outward conditions and the accidents determining their manner of development. Even where the best are at their roughest, and the worst are tempted to flock in upon them, men and women are still found to be good fellows in the main. And so, wherever the predatory class is strong enough to maintain valid war against the honest part of the community, the best hope for society lies in a stern acceptance of their challenge. They must be made to feel that the true man is stouter than the knave, and that the true man has his own strong arm for a defence whenever he is left without aid from the strong arm of the law.

FOOLISH FASHIONS.

Fashion is a tyrant; always has been, and apparently has no intention of ever being anything else; a cruel and oppressive tyrant, delighting in nothing so much as in bodily torture and general inconvenience.

Begin at the ninth century, and the cottes hardies of the then fashionable ladies—those tight-fitting, scooped-out, sleeveless overcoats by which the women sought to give themselves the appearance of possessing jimp and trim waists, whether natural or no. A century later, and we find an unmistakable corset, with bones and lace complete, decking the figure of the Fiend of Fashion in a manuscript of the time of Edward the Confessor. This fiend wears not only a pair of stays, but sleeves and skirts of such inordinate length that they are knotted up, as was then the custom, to keep them out of the wearer's way. Presently came the surcoats, which trailed about a yard on the ground, and which at last trailed so many yards on the ground, that Charles the Fifth of France threatened excommunication against all and sundry who dared to wear a dress which terminated "like the tail of a serpent."

Contemporaneous with the knotted sleeves and the trailing surcoat, which was more like our modern court-train than anything else, were the snake-toed shoes, and those high, pointed sugar-loaf head-dresses, running so far back that one wonders how they ever kept on the head at all; as well as those square and wondrously constructed fabrics, spreading out wider towards the top and surmounted with crowns of jewel work or of flowers, which seemed as if they must overbalance the wearer. The Dauphin put an end to these special monstrosities, and curtailed both sleeves and skirts, while he cut off the snake toes from the feet and cut down the towering fabric from the head. The women (as is their custom, God bless them!) resisted these innovations in favour of common sense and convenience; and resisted successfully; until one Poulaine, a shoemaker, devised an attractive shoe with a high heel, which, being both perilous and unnatural, immediately "took."

Catherine de Medici admired wasps' waists. To create both the reality and the semblance, she invented full-puffed sleeves, a huge triple ruff round the neck, full and bustled skirts, a long tight stomacher, with a frill round the bottom of it; so that by contrast with frills and bustles here, there, and everywhere, added to the actuality of the tightly laced long-pointed stomacher body, the waist took unto itself the form and relative dimensions of a wasp's middle. The real corset underneath the stomacher was a stiff machine strengthened by a corset-cover of light steel bars, which gave just thirteen inches and no more, to the waist, and which must truly (as one writer said), have made the wearer look as if she were imprisoned in a fortress. Our own gracious Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, copied her royal sister of France in this sage and satisfactory fashion; but the English corset-cover of perforated steel was larger, heavier, clumsier, than the French; it was as severe for torture, but less efficient for what the taste of the day called elegance: which is just what we might have expected. The men of the period, too, and the men of other periods also, affected stays and tight lacing and the stomacher-shaped vest to match, and puffed-out sleeves, padded breeches, with wasp's markings about the body, to make the size of the waist look as small in proportion as their wives'. A glance at the portraits of the great men and courtiers of the time, will show the presence of the stiff unyielding corset under their richly embroidered vests, and the strange passion they had for making themselves in front as much as possible like the figure which we now idolize as Punch.

It was in the reign of Elizabeth that lawn and cambric frills first came into the country as an improvement on the less luxurious holland. When the queen had her first lawn ruffs, there was no one to starch them, so she had to get some Dutch women over, who understood the mystery. It is said that her first starcher was the wife of the coachman Guillan; afterwards, Mistress Dingham Vanden Plasse, the wife of a Flemish knight, established herself in London as a professed starcher. She gave lessons in her profession, and many ladies sent their daughters and kinswomen to learn of her. Her terms were five pounds for teaching the art generally, and twenty shillings additional for teaching how to "seeth" the starch. It was yellowed with saffron; which fashion obtained for a long while. We all remember reading how Mistress Turner, the murderess of Sir Thomas Overbury, gave this saffron-coloured starch its death blow, by wearing her elaborately got-up frills and ruffs of the nicest shade of yellow on the day of her execution; just as Mrs. Manning in the same way put an end to black satin for half a generation at least. Philip Stubs, an honest citizen, who wrote in 1585 on the sins and follies of his time, wrote thus of ruffs and

their attendant evils: "The women there vse great ruffes and neckerchers of holland, laune, cameruke, and such clothe as the greatest threed shall not be so big as the least haire that is; and lest they should fall downe, they are smeared and starched in the devil's liquore—I mean starche; after that dried with great diligence, streaked, patted, and rubbed very nicely, and so applied to their goodly neckes, and withal vnderpropped with supportasses (as I told you before), the stately arches of pride; beyond all this they have a further fetche, nothing inferiour to the rest, as namely, three or four degrees of minor ruffes, placed *gradation*, one beneath another, and all under the mayster devilruffe. The skirtes, then, of these great ruffes are long and wide, every way pleated and crested full curiously. God wot! Then, last of all, they are either clogged with gold, silver, or silk lace of stately price, wrought all over with needleworke, speckeled and sparkeled here and there with the sunne, the mone, the starres, and many other antiques strange to beholde. Some are wrought with open worke downe to the midst of the ruffe, and further; some with close works; some with purled lace so cloied, and other gewgaws so pestered, as the ruffe is the least part of itself. Sometimes they are pinned upp to their eares, sometimes they are suffered to hange over theyre shoulders, like windemill sailes fluttering in the winde; and thus every one pleaseth herselfe in her foolish devises." But bad as Queen Elizabeth's ruffs were, they were by no means equal in absurdity to those of the Venetian ladies, who seem to have taken the turkey-cock for their model.

Besides these sinful ruffs and the infernal liquor in which they were steeped, Queen Elizabeth patronised other abominations. She painted her face, and she used false hair; of which last vanity, indeed, she had above eighty changes of various kinds always on hand; whereby she set the fashion of "curled, frisled, and crisped" hair, "laid out in wreaths and borders from one ear to another," which, lest it should fall down, was "underpropped with forks, wires, and I cannot tell what, rather like grim stern monsters than chaste Christian matrons." A godless fashion that excited the wrath of the worthy Stubs anew. Then, as for gowns and petticoats, had not the ladies these of all colours and all fashions? "Some with sleeves hanging down to their skirts, trailing on the ground, and cast over their shoulders like cows' tails," and "some with shorter sleeves, cut up the arm and pointed with silk ribbon, very gallantly hid with true lovers' knots." All of which fashions the more sober minded of the time found to be intolerable innovations on the good old ways, and, without question, signs of the downfall and decay of all things wholesome and holy.

The men were to the full as silly about their dress in those days as the women; and wore such preposterously stuffed doublets and hosen, that a scaffolding was obliged to be erected round the interior of the Parliament House, for the accommodation of the members. It was taken down in the eighth year of Queen Elizabeth's reign, when the fashion was laid aside for a time. But only for a time. For King James of doubtful memory, revived the quilting and the padding, and the stuffing, and ungainliness of that special style of costume; and an ugly business he made of it. Charles the First had a good mode. Looser than his father's, and chaster than his son's, picturesque, and yet in a certain way convenient, simple and graceful, his tailors and milliners were what the French would call "inspired," to good purpose. The picturesqueness remained, even under the more sober handling of the Puritans. The flowing curls, rich lace collar and cuffs, profuse embroidery, and wealth of ribbons, of Charles the Second came next; but both in Cromwell's time, and Charles's, the wasp's waist among women had its advocates and supporters, and the young ladies strove all they could, by tight-lacing, to "attain a wand-like smallness of waste, never thinking themselves small enough until they can span their waists."

Watteau, Dresden shepherdesses, and Sèvres china, show us what was considered beautiful in female figures in the times of Louis the Fourteenth and Louis the Fifteenth; in all we find wasps' waists and puffed-out skirts. In our own country, the farthingale of Queen Anne's time, like the farthingale or verdingale of Queen Elizabeth's, was relied on as aiding in this desired though but little desirable effect of a "middle small," and resisted all the satire and remonstrances by which it was sought to be abolished. Like our crinoline of yesterday, the farthingale upset crockery, hurt men's shins, and caused various and serious inconveniences. But the ladies of that time, like the ladies of this, thought more of the fashion than of the beauty, and less of the inconvenience to others than of their own childish pleasure in a selfish fancy. The monstrous hoops continued so long as the craze lasted, and when they were abandoned, it was for no more reasonable motive than a new craze. Short petticoats, an enormous hoop, and a very low bodice, long ruffles, a frilled cap, and a jimp waist laced tight and small, were all set upon two high-heeled slippers by way of pedestal for the idol; with curiously frizzled hair and patched face and neck, the fine lady of the period was complete at all points, and afraid of no rival that could be brought against her. Still her most formidable arm of conquest lay in her waist, and the smaller she could make this by stays and torture, the greater her self-satisfaction and the more complete her triumph. One of the requisite accomplishments of a Mantua-maker at this time was that "she must know how to hide all the defects in the proportions of the body, and must be able to mould the shape of the stays so as to preserve the intestines, that while she corrects the body she may not interfere with the pleasures of the palate."

> I own her taper form is made to please,
> Yet if you saw her unconfined by *stays!*

says Gay in The Toilette. And by another quotation from Congreve, it seems that the

"stays of steel which arm Aurelia with a shape to kill" were held good work for the "Mulcibers" in the Minories, and that Aurelia was all the more killing the less her shape was according to nature, and the more substantially deformed the Mulcibers and the steel stays could made her. In the court of Louis the Sixteenth the completeness of the feminine costume depended on the form of the stays. For many years before this—in fact, from the beginning of the eighteenth century—staymakers had used a thick leather, called *bend*, about a quarter of an inch thick, and not unlike shoe-sole leather, for their stays.

The French Revolution, tainted with many follies and disgraced by many infamies, did yet try after a more radical and centralised principle of life; and, among other things, for a more rational costume; going back for this to the pure and graceful forms of Grecian drapery. This was so far an advantage, as that it did away with the artificial necessity for a minute waist, and abolished cages, bustles, farthingales, and the whole host of petticoat inflators. The bodice loose, the waist short—too short—the skirt untrimmed and long—too long, seeing that useless yards of train trailed on the ground, just as at the present time, when useless yards trail and men's lives are a burden to them by reason of perpetual entanglement and consequent rebuke—long gloves up to the elbow, and classically arranged hair; this was the costume of the French revolution in its highest and most æsthetic aspect. Then came the more fantastic mode of the Empire; and then, in 1810, tight-lacing broke out again with redoubled fury, and stays were made, not of whalebone nor of leather, but of steel and iron bars from three to four inches broad, and some not less than eighteen inches long. It was no uncommon thing to see a mother lay her daughter on the floor, put her foot on her back, and break half a dozen laces in tightening her stays! Eighteen inches for the waist was again set up as the standard of elegance; and the staymakers put all their art and ingenuity into making the corset an instrument of even more profound torture than formerly.

"About this time it was the custom of some fashionable staymakers to sew a narrow, stiff, curved bar of steel along the upper edge of the stays, which, extending back to the shoulders on each side, effectually kept them back, and rendered the use of shoulder-straps superfluous. The slightest tendency to stoop was at once corrected by the use of the backboard, which was strapped flat against the back of the waist and shoulders, extending up the back of the neck, where a steel ring, covered with leather, projected to the front, and encircled the throat." Towards the end of George the Third's reign, gentlemen as well as ladies put themselves into stays, and the practice has always been more or less followed throughout the Continent. As long ago as 1760 it was the fashion in Berlin and Holland to choose the handsomest boy in the family for tight-lacing, just as it is the fashion in China for even the poorest families to pick out one girl for the "golden water-lilies," in which the Celestials delight, and by which pretty euphemism they choose to designate their hideous mutilation of female feet. Prince de Ligne and Prince Kaunitz were invariably encased in most expensively made satin corsets; the former wearing black, and the latter white. Dr. Doran calls the officers of Gustavus Adolphus "the tightest-laced exquisites of suffering humanity." In many things we of these times have improved on the past, without a shadow of doubt; but in crinolines and stays? Questionable. At all events, let us consult the marvellously funny evidence collected at the end of a book called The Corset and the Crinoline, from which we have been borrowing solemn facts, and see what certain people affirm by personal experience to be still the fashion and the practice in England.

In The Englishwoman's Magazine of November, 1867, is a letter from an English gentleman, who has been educated at Vienna, and who writes to detail his experience of stays. It is all very well, he says, for strong-minded women who have never worn a pair of stays, or for gentlemen blinded by hastily formed prejudices, to anathematise an article of dress of the good qualities of which they are utterly ignorant, and which, consequently, they cannot appreciate; but let them try before they condemn; let them go, as this special gentleman went, to Vienna, be, as he was, tightly laced up in a fashionable Viennese corset by a sturdy Viennese mädchen, and though, at the first, still as he, they would probably feel ill at ease and awkward, and the daily lacing tighter and tighter would produce pain and inconvenience, yet in time they would not only grow accustomed to it, but be as anxious as any of the others "to have their corsets laced as tightly as a pair of strong arms could draw them." Then they would say with him, that the "sensation of being tightly laced in an elegant well-made tightly-fitting pair of corsets is superb." The author of The Corset and the Crinoline further assures its readers that many English boys who have been educated on the Continent, and have there become accustomed to the use of corsets, still keep up the practice here at home; and that we have a whole generation of such corset-wearers, who lace themselves as tightly as the most wasp-waisted woman, quite unsuspected by the world at large.

Another correspondent in the same paper, a lady this time, gives her experience. As her parents were in India, she had no one to particularly care for her, and was therefore allowed, she says, "to attain the age of fourteen before any care was bestowed on her figure." Fortunately for her (?), the return home of her father and mother saved her from growing into a clumsy, inelegant girl; for her mamma was so shocked at her appearance that she took the unusual plan of making her sleep in her corset. At first she suffered what she mildly terms "considerable discomfort," for the stays were extra stiff, filled with whalebone, and furnished

with shoulder-straps, to cure a bad habit of stooping into which she had fallen; and they had an inflexible busk in front. But soon she got accustomed to her corsets, and now is infinitely grateful to her dear mamma, who gave her a wasp's waist, paralysed her intercostal muscles, and murdered Nature.

This experience of corset wearing at night is not so "unusual" as this miserable martyr seems to think, writes another fair tight-lacer. It is *the rule* in many fashionable West-end schools. She, the writer of this confession, has just finished her education at one of these fashionable West-end schools, where she was sent when thirteen years of age. Though but a slender slip of a girl, she was immediately bound up in a stiff tight-laced pair of stays, fastened at the back in a cunning knot which she could not undo, and was made to wear them night and day. As she was growing at the time, her stays soon got horribly tight for her; but from constant pressure the ribs were not suffered to expand in proportion to the general growth everywhere else; and Débutaute, as she signs herself, is now happy in the possession of a structural deformity and certain vital organs which have been tampered with and damaged. For, unfortunately Nature did not provide for wasps' waists when she made the heart and liver and lungs and stomach and spleen, and placed those organs within a palisading of ribs to be protected from injury. She never meant this defence-work to be crushed in upon them, and pressed so closely as to leave no room for healthy action; "superb" though the sensation of being tightly laced may be. The thing does not admit of argument. There is no rational defence possible in favour of such a senseless practice; though a medical man, or a mischievous idiot who so signs himself, comes forward in the same delectable publication, and declares that "ladies who are content with a moderate application of the corset may secure that most elegant female charm, a slender waist, without fear of injury to health."

Another correspondent—a mother this time—is "happy" to say that, by a judicious application of the corset, her eldest daughter has a waist of eighteen, and her youngest a waist of seventeen, inches. Another—a wife—married a man who thought a small waist the greatest beauty a woman could possess. The young wife had a waist of the elephantine proportions of twenty-three inches; but, "determined not to lose an atom of her husband's affection, for the sake of a little trouble, and not bearing to think that he could ever like any one's figure better than her own, went and got a pair of stays, made very strong and filled with stiff bone, measuring only fourteen inches round the waist." This pleasant kind of corset she put on with the assistance of her maid, and at first going off tightened herself into eighteen inches; and at night slept in her stays, "without loosing the lace in the least." The next day she pulled herself in another inch, the next another, and so on, still wearing her stays at night, until she had got her waist to the desired fourteen inches. "For the first few days the pain was very great," she says; "but as soon as the stays were laced close, and I had worn them so for a few days, I began to care nothing about it, and in a month or so I quite enjoyed the sensation; and when I let my husband see me with a dress to fit, I was amply repaid for my trouble."

We trust that this species of living suttee will not become common among our young wives, and that husbands liking waists of only fourteen inches round, and not objecting to stays worn through the night to secure that charm, may be rare phenomena of ignorance and folly.

One young lady, proud of her ugliness, tells the world in great glee that her waist is only thirteen inches round! Another, that hers is twelve; a third, that hers is thirteen, and has been reduced to that from twenty-three, by the judicious treatment of a fashionable schoolmistress. This young lady, giving her own experience, speaks of a schoolfellow, a girl who was stout and largely built, and with whom "two strong maids were obliged to use their utmost force to make her waist the size ordered by the lady principal, viz., seventeen inches, and though she fainted twice while her stays were being made to meet, she wore them without causing injury to her health, and before she left school she had a waist measuring only fourteen inches, yet she never suffered a day's illness." The young ladies in this precious school had a kind of rivalry among them as to which could get the smallest waist, and while being tightened, so that they could scarcely breathe, they would gasp out to the maid to pull them in tighter yet, and not let the lace slip, for her life. But somehow it fell out that most of these human wasps, though so singularly well in health, became pale, languid, without much appetite, and quite the reverse of the joyous, hearty, rosy, natural creatures, generally assumed to be the traditional English girl. This little fact we take to be conclusive—did we want any other conclusive argument save our own common sense and the immutable conditions of the human anatomy—as to the deadly mischief of tight lacing.

POLLY'S ONE OFFER.

IN SIX CHAPTERS. CHAPTER V.

Polly did not find her position, under these circumstances, at all unpleasant—rather the reverse, indeed. There was a great deal going on at the Grange; never was Maggie so busy in the kitchen, or so little at leisure to devote herself to her friend; Laura and Fanny had, of course, occupations of their own, and were not going to be troubled with Maggie's darling; and so it fell out that she was often left to Bob, who had plenty of idle time on his hands, and was glad to employ it.

The first morning after her arrival Polly was introduced to Stella in a large level pasture field, and Bob having put her in the saddle with infinite care, and many assurances that she

need not be in the least afraid, led the pretty creatures slowly round the field. They were a capital match, he said, and if Polly liked, Stella should be hers. Then Polly had the bridle in her own hands, and Stella walked quietly and obligingly after Bob close to the hedge, and then across the field to the gate, where Mrs. Livingstone stood, without being led. Mrs. Livingstone said Stella was admirably trained, and a docile, fine-tempered thing; and then she commended Polly as sitting nicely and straight up, and bade Bob mind and take care of her. This lesson was repeated every morning after breakfast, and Polly could soon ride well enough to be trusted on the road with Bob and Maggie, and so they took several excursions together, not very long, and Polly made acquaintance and drank tea informally at several neighbouring houses, where she was evidently welcomed for somebody's sake besides her own.

Every time this significant sort of welcome was given her, Polly's heart suffered that strange physical wrench, and so it did often when she was with Bob alone, and he said kind words, and gave her kind looks that implied his love for her. He was never rough with her now, but very quiet and wary, as if he had an inkling of that hidden pang, and was watching for his opportunity to speak without scaring her, and so finally to cure it. His wooing was not at all unlike the process of breaking-in Stella; Polly was quite as shy, as proud, as averse to bit and bridle as that pretty thoroughbred; but, once subdued, Bob thought she would also be as good and as obedient to his hand. Yet all this while that he was endeavouring to make her compliant and tractable, Polly was hardening her mind against him, and perplexing Maggie more and more every day. She had no fear of herself what she should answer if Bob were so rash as to make love to her openly (as if his daily life at present was not all love-making!); but she had many doubts whether she had done what she ought to have done in coming to Blackthorn Grange. She had read very few novels, and was a child for worldly wisdom; but she knew it was not good for a governess to be called a *flirt*, and Maggie had said to her that *if* she did *not* like Bob, she was no better than a *flirt* and a *coquette*, to which Polly had replied that she *did* like Bob, and she would not have bad names fastened upon her. But both the girls knew that they were talking at cross purposes, and that *liking* meant very different things in their vocabularies; standing for downright true love in Maggie's, and in Polly's for a mere general sentiment free to all the world.

Thus matters went on for a week, Bob always confident and easy, Polly sweet with him and savage with herself, and Maggie at her wits' end over the vanity and vexation of other people's courtships. "If," cogitated she—"*if* Polly behaves badly to Bob, she'll have such a fall in my mother's esteem that I shall never be allowed to set eyes on her again, the plaguy puss! She would be awfully kind and sensible if she were left to her own discretion, for she has the dearest little warm heart in the world for them that love her; and she need not think she is blinding *me;* she is ever so fond of Bob, bless her! only she is persuaded that she's cut out for a single life. What a silly, selfish woman Mrs. Curtis must be to have filled her with such notions! I have not patience to think of her!"

The wrench at Polly's heart was very frequently repeated at this time; it was renewed, indeed, day by day. There was an old friend of the Livingstone family, a widow lady, who often dropped in with her work of an afternoon, and was quite in the confidence of the sisters. She tried to take up Polly in the same way, during one of her visits, and extolled Bob so highly that Maggie sat in dread lest Polly should indulge in one of those sharp satiric speeches for which she was famous at school when provoked. But no; Polly sat humiliated and in pain, listening to feeble anecdotes of Bob's babyhood and boyhood, most of which she had already heard from his mother, and wishing she was safe at home and her trials and temptations over. The family friend plainly assumed that she had a special interest in Bob, or soon would have, and she did not feel skilful enough to parry the assumption without betraying that she understood it. All Polly's feints consisted in refusing to see what she did not wish to see. While the talk was still at its height, down came a heavy pour of rain, and Bob strolled in from the garden. Polly was in possession of his peculiar chair, and, quite simply, not meaning any offence or expecting it to be taken, he said, "Get up, Polly, and you shall sit on my knee." Polly got up, and would have stepped away; but Bob dexterously intercepted her and throned her on his knee, adding, in a cheerful explanatory tone, "She is going to be my little wife, Mrs. Davis—are you not, Polly?"

"There go two words to that bargain," said Maggie, and laughed nervously. Polly did not speak, but she made a gentle decided move to extricate herself, her heart beating with pang after pang, and her eyes turned with pathetic entreaty on Bob's face. Bob, who loved her eyes, smiled at their helpless sweetness, and thought they were like his favourite setter's when she cowered at his feet, fearing punishment. He did not let her go at once, and she did not struggle—dignity forbade—but she slipped away by-and-by, and contrived to say, pleasantly, that though it might be a vast honour to sit on Bob's knee, she greatly preferred a chair, at which Bob laughed, perhaps rather too incredulously.

The day but one after this was the day fixed for Polly to go home. Mrs. Livingstone was very kind to her, and hoped she would soon return for a longer stay; and this she repeated so frequently that Polly quite understood that *she* had no doubt of it. Bob left her little peace, but he did not put her out of her pain until the last morning, when she had begun to think she was to get away without incurring the worst test. It was settled the night before

that she should go to the station with Maggie and Laura in the pony-carriage, which had a front and back seat; and when she had said good-bye to Mrs. Livingstone and Fanny indoors and came out at the garden-door in the morning sunshine, there was Bob in a light summer suit, looking in the finest spirits, but excited withal.

"Are *you* going, Bob? I have put on my driving gloves," said Laura, who had already taken the reins.

"You may drive and welcome; I only want to go to the turn of Pickett's-lane; I'll sit behind with Polly," said he, and put her in and followed himself. Then Maggie mounted by her sister, and off the pony went at a frisky trot.

Polly's parting glimpse of the Grange was adorned by the figures of Mrs. Livingstone and Fanny in the porch, Fanny waving her hand and crying, "Come back soon, Polly; come back soon!" The road was long and perfectly level and straight, but it wavered in capricious zig-zags before Polly's eyes, while roses and lilies contended for the dominion of her face. Bob was there, and watching her, and her heart was all one great swelling pang. She would have given anything for leave to cry, but this was neither the time nor place for tears, and she had forgotten her veil. Bob was apparently occupied with the landscape, but he did not lose one change of her sweet little face, and presently he began to speak of her return to the Grange.

"But I shall see you before then, Polly," he went on; "I am coming to Norminster next week, and you will introduce me to Jane and your mother. I am only a rough fellow, but I love you dearly, Polly, and you must speak for me. I'll promise to take all the care in the world of you if you'll be my precious little wife —don't you believe me, Polly?"

"I know you are very good, Bob, but I made up my mind long since that I could take care of myself," said Polly, with sudden, invincible, wicked quiet, that came to her aid from no one could tell whence.

"What on earth do you mean, Polly?" demanded Bob, startled out of his happy complacency.

"What I say. You are very kind, but—but I don't intend to marry."

Bob was posed for a moment, though not silenced. "Change your mind for *me*, Polly. Don't you think we could be happy together? I have quite set my heart on *you;* I cannot live without you."

"That is what all men say beforehand; but I have heard my mother talk. No, Bob; I shall make a better governess than wife; I am not cut out for anybody's wife."

"Let *me* judge of that, Polly; don't shake your head. What has come over you to be such a little savage all at once? You were very nice yesterday; why did you let a fellow go on worshipping you, if you meant to be so hard to him at last? I don't understand it; I won't believe you can seriously mean to use a fellow so badly. Is it true, then, that you don't care for me? is it true that you can't be happy with me—that you won't even think of it?"

There was no softening or promise in Polly's countenance. She was feeling that she had come through the dreaded ordeal wonderfully, and the pride and excitement of a complete victory over the traitor in her bosom sustained her. Bob was speechless for a few minutes. They approached the turn of Pickett's-lane. At the supreme moment he looked at her once more with wrathful love, and said, in a constrained voice, "Then you'll have nothing to do with me, Polly?" Her heart moved with a cruel spasm, but her "No, Bob," came out cold, curt, and clear as a drop of iced water.

Bob stepped into the road as Laura checked the pony; the halt was not for half a minute, and he had disappeared, and Polly was left to enjoy her triumph of principle over natural affection.

Maggie understood but too well what had happened, and, doing by Polly as she would have been done by in similar circumstances, she took no notice of her disappointing friend until they arrived at the station. There were not two minutes to wait, and the train dashed in. Laura stayed outside with the pony. Maggie took Polly's ticket, saw her luggage safe and herself in a carriage alone; and then, just as the guard came along with his whistle and "all right," she kissed her and said, with a sob, "I am awfully sorry, Polly; but it is your own fault. You deserve to die an old maid, and I believe you will!"

CHAPTER VI.

It may, perhaps, be anticipated that Polly repented at once, for she was certainly fond of Bob; but it cannot confidently be averred that she did. When she arrived at home, her mother and Jane thought her looking remarkably rosy and well; nothing was observed to be the matter with her spirits, and as she kept her own counsel about Bob's offer, she had neither praise nor blame to endure, nor question, nor comment, nor criticism. Mrs. Sanders did remark once, "You have not picked up a *beau* in the country, then, Miss Polly?" and her mother did rejoin that she hoped her girls had more sense than to dream of *beaux*, but that was the nearest allusion to the subject; and, when the holidays were over, she went back to the Warden House and resumed her schoolroom work in her orderly systematic way, as if she had not a care or a thought beyond it. For a month or two Mrs. Stapylton lived in daily expectation of a notice that she must provide herself with another governess, but no notice coming, she concluded that Polly had missed her chance, and as she suited her admirably in every way, she was not sorry. Maggie's letters were not much less frequent or affectionate than formerly, but Polly was not invited again to spend her holidays at the Grange, as was very natural. Nor did they meet. People may live half a lifetime within a few miles of each other, and never meet, if neither desire it; and the three years Miss Mill had decreed as the shortest time any governess who meant to prosper in her vocation should stay in her first place, went over without ever

bringing the two friends within eyesight of each other again.

Nobody died, meanwhile, and nobody was broken-hearted; only Mrs. Livingstone was once heard to say, bitterly, to Maggie, "Don't let me hear any more of your Polly Curtis!" and henceforth Polly's letters were read in private, and her name was never mentioned at the Grange. Bob was not the man to rave over a disappointment of the heart; he was more inclined to console himself in a way that was a sorrow to those at home. But Polly heard nothing of these consolations. When she mused of her old visits at Blackthorn Grange, which she did with a tender paradoxical regret (seeing how she had terminated them), her imagination always represented everything there as it used to be, though she knew Laura and Fanny were married and gone, and that Mrs. Livingstone was no longer the active strong house-mother she had been. And an unconscious change had come over Polly herself. A sweeter little woman to behold there was not, far nor near, though she dressed herself indifferently, as women do who have no desire or expectation of attracting. She had great fortitude at her tedious work, and never flagged: she improved herself by private study, and had economised a few pounds, which she meant to carry her to a foreign school, where she proposed to teach English in return for lessons in music and languages. Mrs. Curtis approved of her entirely, and Jane had ceased to complain. Yes, Polly was most exceedingly reasonable and practical, and was an anxiety to no one; yet sometimes a terrible sense of isolation would come over her, and she would cry softly, with that old spasm of the heart, "Oh, what a fool I have been!" as if she were sorry for some past irretrievable blunder. She had no longer the conceit of her own strength that was so obtrusive in her at seventeen. She had heard other people talk besides her mother and Mrs. Sanders, and in the loving kindly family where she was domesticated, she saw quite the other side—the happy side—of married life. But she was naturally reserved, and as she had religiously kept her one offer to herself, so she kept her repentance (if it was repentance), and at the three years' end she prepared to change the scene of her life, and go to Germany.

Maggie Livingstone shed a few vexed tears over Polly's letter which brought the first announcement of her projected travels, and her brother Bob surprised her again, as he had surprised her on the original occasion which led to Polly's first visit to the Grange. "Going to Germany, is she?" said he, when the communication of her affairs had been made to him—"going to Germany——"

"Yes, and I shall never see her again very likely. Poor little Polly! I was so fond of her, Bob!"

"Other people were fond of her, too, Maggie, but it was no use; she has not a bit of heart."

"Don't say that, Bob; she has heart enough for anything, but her head was crammed with ridiculous theories and nonsense. I daresay she is wiser now."

"We are all of us that when it's too late," rejoined Bob, and walked out of the room softly whistling.

It was the same evening that Maggie addressing her brother, said: "Bob, you'll drive me into Lanswood on Saturday; I have written to ask Polly to meet me at Miss Wiggins's shop if it is fair, for a last walk and talk together. I can't bear the thought of letting her go so far from home without a word of good-bye."

"All right, Maggie," said Bob, with seeming indifference, but Maggie knew better than to believe it was real. She felt sure that when he did not hear or answer her further talk that he was musing of Polly—perhaps whether she was wiser or not now.

Polly was touched by Maggie's longing to see her again: "Dear old Maggie, she has forgiven me at last," she said.

Polly arrived first at the place of their appointment, and was sitting up-stairs in Miss Wiggins's show-room when the Grange dog-cart stopped at the door. She looked out with a pale little emotional face, and the cruel wrench at her heart; but no one looked up from below. There was Bob dressed in mourning, and Maggie and a little boy also in mourning, and a groom behind, who assisted Maggie to alight, and then lifted the child down and set him on the pavement by her. Maggie took the boy by the hand to enter the shop, and Bob drove off up the street, and was out of sight before his sister could mount the stairs. Polly stood fronting the door, and as Maggie caught a view of her she cried: "Bless thy bonnie face, Polly, it's just the same as ever!" and they kissed with all the old love that used to be between them. And, of course, they cried a little together, until the appearance of Miss Wiggins, intent on business, obliged them to clear their countenances, and take an interest in the fashions.

Maggie said she wanted nothing for herself, but she would look at some children's spring coats, and while Miss Wiggins was bringing forth patterns, she called the child to her knees, and taking off his hat, ruffled up his hair, and asked Polly who he was like.

"He is like Bob," said Polly, and blushed with soft surprise.

"It is Bob's son," replied Maggie. "Kiss this pretty lady, Arty." Arty was nothing loth, and Polly having supplied him with a box of harmless sugar-plums from Miss Wiggins's various stores, he sat on a stool at their feet and was extremely content with his own society while the friends talked in hushed and interrupted tones.

"A hundred things have happened at the Grange that I never told you of; but you may have heard whispers? No! You know nothing about it, then? You governesses live quite out of the world, I suppose," said Maggie, and paused.

"In a very quiet secluded little world of our own," said Polly, and lifted up the child's face to look at him again.

"He's pretty, isn't he? It was after—you know what—Bob took up suddenly with a girl in the village, and though we never knew it until she was dead (she died last October) he was married to her, and Arty is his heir. Bob dotes on him, and my mother too; she insisted on having him brought home to the Grange, and if ever you go to our church again you'll see 'Alice, the faithful wife of Robert Livingstone' on the family monument. She was quite a common person, and Bob would never have acknowledged her in my mother's lifetime; but there's the story, and not so bad as it might have been. She was handsome, and she loved Bob, or she would never have borne being looked down on as she was for his sake, or have kept his secret. However, it is out now, and she is gone——"

"Hasn't Arty eaten sweeties enough for once?" insinuated Polly, caressing the child, but making no response to Maggie.

"Yes: give the box to aunty to put in her pocket," Maggie said, and Arty with a little unwillingness yielded it up.

Then the spring coats were looked at, and one chosen, and a garden hat, and Arty was put to sleep for an hour on Miss Wiggins's bed, while Polly and her friend took a walk by the river, and continued their conversation. All the news was on Maggie's side. Polly had none—literally none.

"And you never will have any while you go on living to yourself—your interests will lessen every day you live. Oh! Polly, it makes me sad to look at you, and to think what might have been," said Maggie, tenderly.

"Never mind! Let bygones be bygones;" said Polly, but there were tears in her eyes, and almost a sob in her throat.

Then they discussed Fanny and Laura and Maggie's private concerns which were in a promising way, and the time went so swiftly that they were five minutes behind the hour agreed on for Bob to take his sister and little son up at Miss Wiggins's shop to go home. The dog-cart, however, was not at the door, and Maggie said she was glad, for Bob did not like the mare to be kept standing. They ascended to the show-room to wait, and he was not long in coming; he was too soon, indeed, for half they had to say. At the sound of the wheels in the street, Polly offered herself for a last hug of her friend's kind arms, and Maggie was all in tears.

"You'll come down and speak to Bob, just for a minute?" said she, and Polly suffered herself to be entreated, and went with all her heart in her face.

Bob evidently expected her, though he coloured when she appeared; and as he lifted his hat, she saw he was ever so much older, but he had his kind rallying smile for her, as he said: "You wear well, Polly; better than most of us, I think."

"It is a calm life at the Warden House," said she, quite with a shaken voice.

"And so you are going all the way to Germany—going by yourself?"

"Yes." She had to stand aside for Maggie and the child to reach their places, and from the step of Miss Wiggins's shop she waved them all her good-byes. She was still standing gazing after them when Bob looked round before turning the corner of the street, and told Maggie to dry her eyes and not fret.

"I can't help fretting when I think I shall perhaps never, never see her again; dear little thing that she is! Oh! Bob, if you had only waited to ask her till now that she's come to a right sense of things."

Bob made no answer to his sister's rueful adjuration; he was lost in thought of Polly's beauty and Polly's sweetness, as they were once and were still, and wondering whether she would have anything to do with him now.

Perhaps you can guess how it all ended, and I need tell you no more.

Yes. Bob asked Polly again, and Polly gave him a prettier answer this time. Mrs. Curtis cried at the wedding, and foreboded many evils, but they have not befallen yet. While waiting for them, she is, however, blessed in a standing grievance—namely, that Polly's one boy, is not the eldest son, and will not inherit the Livingstone Manor. But she is not aware that she is herself to blame for this, her pet mortification, and Polly is not likely to tell her.

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THE MOONSTONE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WOMAN IN WHITE," &c. &c.

SECOND PERIOD. THE DISCOVERY OF THE TRUTH. (1848—1849.)

THIRD NARRATIVE.

THE NARRATIVE OF FRANKLIN BLAKE.

CHAPTER IX.

THE doctor's pretty housemaid stood waiting for me, with the street-door open in her hand. Pouring brightly into the hall, the morning light fell full on the face of Mr. Candy's assistant when I turned, and looked at him.

It was impossible to dispute Betteredge's assertion that the appearance of Ezra Jennings, speaking from the popular point of view, was against him. His gipsy complexion, his fleshless cheeks, his gaunt facial bones, his dreamy eyes, his extraordinary parti-coloured hair, the puzzling contradiction between his face and figure which made him look old and young both together—were all more or less calculated to produce an unfavourable impression of him on a stranger's mind. And yet—feeling this as I certainly did—it is not to be denied that Ezra Jennings made some inscrutable appeal to my sympathies, which I found it impossible to resist. While my knowledge of the world warned me to answer the question which he had put, by acknowledging that I did indeed find Mr. Candy sadly changed, and then to proceed on my way out of the house—my interest in Ezra Jennings held me rooted to the place, and gave him the opportunity of speaking to me in private about his employer, for which he had been evidently on the watch.

"Are you walking my way, Mr. Jennings?" I said, observing that he held his hat in his hand. "I am going to call on my aunt, Mrs. Ablewhite."

Ezra Jennings replied that he had a patient to see, and that he was walking my way.

We left the house together. I observed that the pretty servant girl—who was all smiles and amiability, when I wished her good morning on my way out—received a modest little message from Ezra Jennings, relating to the time at which he might be expected to return, with pursed-up lips, and with eyes which ostentatiously looked anywhere rather than look in his face. The poor wretch was evidently no favourite in the house. Out of the house, I had Betteredge's word for it that he was unpopular everywhere. "What a life!" I thought to myself, as we descended the doctor's door-steps.

Having already referred to Mr. Candy's illness on his side, Ezra Jennings now appeared determined to leave it to me to resume the subject. His silence said significantly, "It's your turn now." I, too, had my reasons for referring to the doctor's illness; and I readily accepted the responsibility of speaking first.

"Judging by the change I see in him," I began, "Mr. Candy's illness must have been far more serious than I had supposed?"

"It is almost a miracle," said Ezra Jennings, "that he lived through it."

"Is his memory never any better than I have found it to-day? He has been trying to speak to me——"

"Of something which happened before he was taken ill?" asked the assistant, observing that I hesitated.

"Yes."

"His memory of events, at that past time, is hopelessly enfeebled," said Ezra Jennings. "It is almost to be deplored, poor fellow, that even the wreck of it remains. While he remembers, dimly, plans that he formed—things, here and there, that he had to say or do, before his illness—he is perfectly incapable of recalling what the plans were, or what the thing was that he had to say or do. He is painfully conscious of his own deficiency, and painfully anxious, as you must have seen, to hide it from observation. If he could only have recovered, in a complete state of oblivion as to the past, he would have been a happier man. Perhaps we should all be happier," he added, with a sad smile, "if we could but completely forget!"

"There are some events surely in all men's lives," I replied, "the memory of which they would be unwilling entirely to lose?"

"That is, I hope, to be said of most men, Mr. Blake. I am afraid it cannot truly be said of *all*. Have you any reason to suppose that the lost remembrance which Mr. Candy tried to recover—while you were speaking to him just now—was a remembrance which it was important to *you* that he should recal?"

In saying those words, he had touched, of his own accord, on the very point upon which I

was anxious to consult him. The interest I felt in this strange man had impelled me, in the first instance, to give him the opportunity of speaking to me; reserving what I might have to say, on my side, in relation to his employer, until I was first satisfied that he was a person in whose delicacy and discretion I could trust. The little that he had said, thus far, had been sufficient to convince me that I was speaking to a gentleman. He had what I may venture to describe as the *unsought self-possession*, which is a sure sign of good breeding, not in England only, but everywhere else in the civilised world. Whatever the object which he had in view, in putting the question that he had just addressed to me, I felt no doubt that I was justified—so far—in answering him without reserve.

"I believe I have a strong interest," I said, "in tracing the lost remembrance which Mr. Candy was unable to recal. May I ask whether you can suggest to me any method by which I might assist his memory?"

Ezra Jennings looked at me, with a sudden flash of interest in his dreamy brown eyes.

"Mr. Candy's memory is beyond the reach of assistance," he said. "I have tried to help it often enough, since his recovery, to be able to speak positively on that point."

This disappointed me; and I owned it.

"I confess you led me to hope for a less discouraging answer than that," I said.

Ezra Jennings smiled. "It may not, perhaps, be a final answer, Mr. Blake. It may be possible to trace Mr. Candy's lost recollection, without the necessity of appealing to Mr. Candy himself."

"Indeed? Is it an indiscretion, on my part, to ask——how?"

"By no means. My only difficulty in answering your question, is the difficulty of explaining myself. May I trust to your patience, if I refer once more to Mr. Candy's illness; and if I speak of it this time, without sparing you certain professional details?"

"Pray go on! You have interested me already in hearing the details."

My eagerness seemed to amuse—perhaps, I might rather say, to please him. He smiled again. We had by this time left the last houses in the town behind us. Ezra Jennings stopped for a moment, and picked some wild flowers from the hedge by the roadside. "How beautiful they are!" he said, simply, showing his little nosegay to me. "And how few people in England seem to admire them as they deserve!"

"You have not always been in England?" I said.

"No. I was born, and partly brought up, in one of our colonies. My father was an Englishman; but my mother——We are straying away from our subject, Mr. Blake; and it is my fault. The truth is, I have associations with these modest little hedgeside flowers——It doesn't matter; we were speaking of Mr. Candy. To Mr. Candy let us return."

Connecting the few words about himself which thus reluctantly escaped him, with the melancholy view of life which led him to place the conditions of human happiness in complete oblivion of the past, I felt satisfied that the story which I had read in his face was, in two particulars at least, the story that it really told. He had suffered as few men suffer; and there was the mixture of some foreign race in his English blood.

"You have heard, I dare say, of the original cause of Mr. Candy's illness?" he resumed. "The night of Lady Verinder's dinner-party was a night of heavy rain. My employer drove home through it in his gig, and reached the house, wetted to the skin. He found an urgent message from a patient, waiting for him; and he most unfortunately went at once to visit the sick person, without stopping to change his clothes. I was myself professionally detained, that night, by a case at some distance from Frizinghall. When I got back the next morning, I found Mr. Candy's groom waiting in great alarm to take me to his master's room. By that time the mischief was done; the illness had set in."

"The illness has only been described to me, in general terms, as a fever," I said.

"I can add nothing which will make the description more accurate," answered Ezra Jennings. "From first to last, the fever assumed no specific form. I sent at once to two of Mr. Candy's medical friends in the town, both physicians, to come and give me their opinion of the case. They agreed with me that it looked serious; but they both strongly dissented from the view I took of the treatment. We differed entirely in the conclusions which we drew from the patient's pulse. The two doctors, arguing from the rapidity of the beat, declared that a lowering treatment was the only treatment to be adopted. On my side, I admitted the rapidity of the pulse, but I also pointed to its alarming feebleness as indicating an exhausted condition of the system, and as showing a plain necessity for the administration of stimulants. The two doctors were for keeping him on gruel, lemonade, barley water, and so on. I was for giving him champagne, or brandy, ammonia, and quinine. A serious difference of opinion, as you see! a difference between two physicians of established local repute, and a stranger who was only an assistant in the house. For the first few days, I had no choice but to give way to my elders and betters; the patient steadily sinking all the time. I made a second attempt to appeal to the plain, undeniably plain, evidence of the pulse. Its rapidity was unchecked, and its feebleness had increased. The two doctors took offence at my obstinacy. They said, 'Mr. Jennings, either we manage this case, or you manage it. Which is it to be?' I said, 'Gentlemen, give me five minutes to consider, and that plain question shall have a plain reply.' When the time had expired, I was ready with my answer. I said, 'You positively refuse to try the stimulant treatment?' They refused in so many

words. 'I mean to try it at once, gentlemen.' —'Try it, Mr. Jennings; and we withdraw from the case.' I sent down to the cellar for a bottle of champagne; and I administered half a tumbler-full of it to the patient with my own hand. The two physicians took up their hats in silence, and left the house."

"You had assumed a serious responsibility," I said. "In your place, I am afraid I should have shrunk from it."

"In my place, Mr. Blake, you would have remembered that Mr. Candy had taken you into his employment, under circumstances which made you his debtor for life. In my place, you would have seen him sinking, hour by hour; and you would have risked anything, rather than let the one man on earth who had befriended you, die before your eyes. Don't suppose that I had no sense of the terrible position in which I had placed myself! There were moments when I felt all the misery of my friendlessness, all the peril of my dreadful responsibility. If I had been a happy man, if I had led a prosperous life, I believe I should have sunk under the task I had imposed on myself. But *I* had no happy time to look back at, no past peace of mind to force itself into contrast with my present anxiety and suspense —and I held firm to my resolution through it all. I took an interval in the middle of the day, when my patient's condition was at its best, for the repose I needed. For the rest of the four-and-twenty hours, as long as his life was in danger, I never left his bedside. Towards sunset, as usual in such cases, the delirium incidental to the fever came on. It lasted more or less through the night; and then intermitted, at that terrible time in the early morning—from two o'clock to five—when the vital energies even of the healthiest of us are at their lowest. It is then that Death gathers in his human harvest most abundantly. It was then that Death and I fought our fight over the bed, which should have the man who lay on it. I never hesitated in pursuing the treatment on which I had staked everything. When wine failed, I tried brandy. When the other stimulants lost their influence, I doubled the dose. After an interval of suspense—the like of which I hope to God I shall never feel again —there came a day when the rapidity of the pulse slightly, but appreciably, diminished; and, better still, there came also a change in the beat—an unmistakable change to steadiness and strength. *Then,* I knew that I had saved him; and then I own I broke down. I laid the poor fellow's wasted hand back on the bed, and burst out crying. An hysterical relief, Mr. Blake —nothing more! Physiology says, and says truly, that some men are born with female constitutions—and I am one of them!"

He made that bitterly professional apology for his tears, speaking quietly and unaffectedly, as he had spoken throughout. His tone and manner, from beginning to end, showed him to be especially, almost morbidly, anxious not to set himself up as an object of interest to me.

"You may well ask, why I have wearied you with all these details?" he went on. "It is the only way I can see, Mr. Blake, of properly introducing to you what I have to say next. Now you know exactly what my position was, at the time of Mr. Candy's illness, you will the more readily understand the sore need I had of lightening the burden on my mind by giving it, at intervals, some sort of relief. I have had the presumption to occupy my leisure, for some years past, in writing a book, addressed to the members of my profession—a book on the intricate and delicate subject of the brain and the nervous system. My work will probably never be finished; and it will certainly never be published. It has none the less been the friend of many lonely hours; and it helped me to while away the anxious time— the time of waiting, and nothing else—at Mr. Candy's bedside. I told you he was delirious, I think? And I mentioned the time at which his delirium came on?"

"Yes."

"Well, I had reached a section of my book, at that time, which touched on this same question of delirium. I won't trouble you at any length with my theory on the subject—I will confine myself to telling you only what it is your present interest to know. It has often occurred to me in the course of my medical practice, to doubt whether we can justifiably infer—in cases of delirium—that the loss of the faculty of speaking connectedly, implies of necessity the loss of the faculty of thinking connectedly as well. Poor Mr. Candy's illness gave me an opportunity of putting this doubt to the test. I understand the art of writing in shorthand; and I was able to take down the patient's 'wanderings,' exactly as they fell from his lips.—Do you see, Mr. Blake, what I am coming to at last?"

I saw it clearly, and waited with breathless interest to hear more.

"At odds and ends of time," Ezra Jennings went on, "I reproduced my shorthand notes, in the ordinary form of writing—leaving large spaces between the broken phrases, and even the single words, as they had fallen disconnectedly from Mr. Candy's lips. I then treated the result thus obtained, on something like the principle which one adopts in putting together a child's 'puzzle.' It is all confusion to begin with; but it may be all brought into order and shape, if you can only find the right way. Acting on this plan, I filled in the blank spaces on the paper, with what the words or phrases on either side of it suggested to me as the speaker's meaning; altering over and over again, until my additions followed naturally on the spoken words which came before them, and fitted naturally into the spoken words which came after them. The result was, that I not only occupied in this way many vacant and anxious hours, but that I arrived at something which was (as it seemed to me), a confirmation of the theory that I held. In plainer words, after putting the broken sentences toge-

ther, I found the superior faculty of thinking going on, more or less connectedly, in my patient's mind, while the inferior faculty of expression was in a state of almost complete incapacity and confusion."

"One word!" I interposed, eagerly. "Did my name occur in any of his wanderings?"

"You shall hear, Mr. Blake. Among my written proofs of the assertion which I have just advanced—or, I ought to say, among the written experiments, tending to put my assertion to the proof—there *is* one, in which your name occurs. For nearly the whole of one night, Mr. Candy's mind was occupied with *something* between himself and you. I have got the broken words, as they dropped from his lips, on one sheet of paper. And I have got the links of my own discovering which connect those words together, on another sheet of paper. The product (as the arithmeticians would say) is an intelligible statement—first, of something actually done in the past; secondly, of something which Mr. Candy contemplated doing in the future, if his illness had not got in the way, and stopped him. The question is whether this does, or does not, represent the lost recollection which he vainly attempted to find when you called on him this morning?"

"Not a doubt of it!" I answered. "Let us go back directly, and look at the papers!"

"Quite impossible, Mr. Blake."

"Why?"

"Put yourself in my position for a moment," said Ezra Jennings. "Would *you* disclose to another person what had dropped unconsciously from the lips of your suffering patient and your helpless friend, without first knowing that there was a necessity to justify you in opening your lips?"

I felt that he was unanswerable, here; but I tried to argue the question, nevertheless.

"My conduct in such a delicate matter as you describe," I replied, "would depend greatly on whether the disclosure was of a nature to compromise my friend, or not."

"I have disposed of all necessity for considering that side of the question, long since," said Ezra Jennings. "Wherever my notes included anything which Mr. Candy might have wished to keep secret, those notes have been destroyed. My manuscript-experiments at my friend's bedside, include nothing, now, which he would have hesitated to communicate to others, if he had recovered the use of his memory. In your case, I have even reason to suppose that my notes contain something which he actually wished to say to you——"

"And yet, you hesitate?"

"And yet, I hesitate. Remember the circumstances, under which I obtained the information which I possess! Harmless as it is, I cannot prevail upon myself to give it up to you, unless you first satisfy me that there is a reason for doing so. He was so miserably ill, Mr. Blake! and he was so helplessly dependent upon Me! Is it too much to ask, if I request you only to hint to me what your interest is in the lost recollection—or what you believe that lost recollection to be?"

To have answered him with the frankness which his language and his manner both claimed from me, would have been to commit myself to openly acknowledging that I was suspected of the theft of the Diamond. Strongly as Ezra Jennings had intensified the first impulsive interest which I had felt in him, he had not overcome my unconquerable reluctance to disclose the degrading position in which I stood. I took refuge once more in the explanatory phrases with which I had prepared myself to meet the curiosity of strangers.

This time, I had no reason to complain of a want of attention on the part of the person to whom I addressed myself. Ezra Jennings listened patiently, even anxiously, until I had done.

"I am sorry to have raised your expectations, Mr. Blake, only to disappoint them," he said. "Throughout the whole period of Mr. Candy's illness, from first to last, not one word about the Diamond escaped his lips. The matter with which I heard him connect your name has, I can assure you, no discoverable relation whatever with the loss or the recovery of Miss Verinder's jewel."

We arrived, as he said those words, at a place where the highway along which we had been walking, branched off into two roads. One led to Mr. Ablewhite's house; and the other to a moorland village some two or three miles off. Ezra Jennings stopped at the road which led to the village.

"My way lies in this direction," he said. "I am really and truly sorry, Mr. Blake, that I can be of no use to you."

His voice told me that he spoke sincerely. His soft brown eyes rested on me for a moment with a look of melancholy interest. He bowed, and went, without another word, on his way to the village.

For a minute or more, I stood and watched him, walking farther and farther away from me; carrying farther and farther away with him what I now firmly believed to be the clue of which I was in search. He turned, after walking on a little way, and looked back. Seeing me still standing at the place where we had parted, he stopped, as if doubting whether I might not wish to speak to him again. There was no time for me to reason out my own situation—to remind myself that I was losing my opportunity, at what might be the turning point of my life, and all to flatter nothing more important than my own self-esteem! There was only time to call him back first, and to think afterwards. I suspect I am one of the rashest of existing men. I called him back—and then I said to myself, "Now there is no help for it. I must tell him the truth!"

He retraced his steps directly. I advanced along the road to meet him.

"Mr. Jennings," I said, "I have not treated you quite fairly. My interest in tracing Mr.

Candy's lost recollection, is not the interest of recovering the Moonstone. A serious personal matter is at the bottom of my visit to Yorkshire. I have but one excuse for not having dealt frankly with you in this matter. It is more painful to me than I can say, to mention to anybody what my position really is."

Ezra Jennings looked at me with the first appearance of embarrassment which I had seen in him yet.

"I have no right, Mr. Blake, and no wish," he said, "to intrude myself into your private affairs. Allow me to ask your pardon, on my side, for having (most innocently) put you to a painful test."

"You have a perfect right," I rejoined, "to fix the terms on which you feel justified in revealing what you heard at Mr. Candy's bedside. I understand, and respect, the delicacy which influences you in this matter. How can I expect to be taken into your confidence, if I decline to admit you into mine? You ought to know, and you shall know, why I am interested in discovering what Mr. Candy wanted to say to me. If I turn out to be mistaken in my anticipations, and if you prove unable to help me when you are really aware of what I want, I shall trust to your honour to keep my secret—and something tells me that I shall not trust in vain."

"Stop, Mr. Blake. I have a word to say, which must be said before you go any farther."

I looked at him in astonishment. The grip of some terrible emotion seemed to have seized him, and shaken him to the soul. His gipsy complexion had altered to a livid greyish paleness; his eyes had suddenly become wild and glittering; his voice had dropped to a tone—low, stern, and resolute—which I now heard for the first time. The latent resources in the man, for good or for evil—it was hard, at that moment, to say which—leapt up in him and showed themselves to me, with the suddenness of a flash of light.

"Before you place any confidence in me," he went on, "you ought to know, and you *must* know, under what circumstances I have been received into Mr. Candy's house. It won't take long. I don't profess, sir, to tell my story (as the phrase is) to any man. My story will die with me. All I ask, is to be permitted to tell you, what I have told Mr. Candy. If you are still in the mind, when you have heard that, to say what you have proposed to say, you will command my attention, and command my services. Shall we walk on?"

The suppressed misery in his face, silenced me. I answered his question by a sign. We walked on.

After advancing a few hundred yards, Ezra Jennings stopped at a gap in the rough stone wall which shut off the moor from the road, at this part of it.

"Do you mind resting a little, Mr. Blake?" he asked. "I am not what I was—and some things shake me."

I agreed of course. He led the way through the gap to a patch of turf on the heathy ground, screened by bushes and dwarf trees on the side nearest to the road, and commanding in the opposite direction a grandly desolate view over the broad brown wilderness of the moor. The clouds had gathered, within the last half hour. The light was dull; the distance was dim. The lovely face of Nature met us, soft and still and colourless—met us without a smile.

We sat down in silence. Ezra Jennings laid aside his hat, and passed his hand wearily over his forehead, wearily through his startling white and black hair. He tossed his little nosegay of wild flowers away from him, as if the remembrances which it recalled were remembrances which hurt him now.

"Mr. Blake!" he said, suddenly. "You are in bad company. The cloud of a horrible accusation has rested on me for years. I tell you the worst at once. I am a man whose life is a wreck, and whose character is gone."

I attempted to speak. He stopped me.

"No," he said. "Pardon me; not yet. Don't commit yourself to expressions of sympathy which you may afterwards wish to recal. I have mentioned an accusation which has rested on me for years. There are circumstances in connexion with it that tell against me. I cannot bring myself to acknowledge what the accusation is. And I am incapable, perfectly incapable, of proving my innocence. I can only assert my innocence. I assert it, sir, on my oath, as a Christian. It is useless to appeal to my honour as a man."

He paused again. I looked round at him. He never looked at me in return. His whole being seemed to be absorbed in the agony of recollecting, and in the effort to speak.

"There is much that I might say," he went on, "about the merciless treatment of me by my own family, and the merciless enmity to which I have fallen a victim. But the harm is done; the wrong is beyond all remedy now. I decline to weary or distress you, sir, if I can help it. At the outset of my career in this country, the vile slander to which I have referred struck me down at once and for ever. I resigned my aspirations in my profession — obscurity was the only hope left for me. I parted with the woman I loved—how could I condemn her to share my disgrace? A medical assistant's place offered itself, in a remote corner of England. I got the place. It promised me peace; it promised me obscurity, as I thought. I was wrong. Evil report, with time and chance to help it, travels patiently, and travels far. The accusation from which I had fled, followed me. I got warning of its approach. I was able to leave my situation voluntarily, with the testimonials that I had earned. They got me another situation, in another remote district. Time passed again; and again the slander that was death to my character found me out. On this occasion I had no warning. My employer said, 'Mr. Jennings, I have no complaint to make against you; but you must set yourself right, or leave me.' I had but one choice—I left him. It's

useless to dwell on what I suffered after that. I am only forty years old now. Look at my face, and let it tell for me the story of some miserable years. It ended in my drifting to this place, and meeting with Mr. Candy. He wanted an assistant. I referred him, on the question of capacity, to my last employer. The question of character remained. I told him what I have told you—and more. I warned him that there were difficulties in the way, even if he believed me. 'Here, as elsewhere,' I said, 'I scorn the guilty evasion of living under an assumed name: I am no safer at Frizinghall than at other places from the cloud that follows me, go where I may.' He answered, 'I don't do things by halves—I believe you, and I pity you. If *you* will risk what may happen, *I* will risk it too.' God Almighty bless him! He has given me shelter, he has given me employment, he has given me rest of mind—and I have the certain conviction (I have had it for some months past) that nothing will happen now to make him regret it."

"The slander has died out?" I said.

"The slander is as active as ever. But when it follows me here, it will come too late."

"You will have left the place?"

"No, Mr. Blake—I shall be dead. For ten years past, I have suffered from an incurable internal complaint. I don't disguise from you that I should have let the agony of it kill me long since, but for one last interest in life, which makes my existence of some importance to me still. I want to provide for a person—very dear to me—whom I shall never see again. My own little patrimony is hardly sufficient to make her independent of the world. The hope, if I could only live long enough, of increasing it to a certain sum, has impelled me to resist the disease by such palliative means as I could devise. The one effectual palliative in my case, is—opium. To that all-potent and all-merciful drug, I am indebted for a respite of many years from my sentence of death. But even the virtues of opium have their limit. The progress of the disease has gradually forced me from the use of opium, to the abuse of it. I am feeling the penalty at last. My nervous system is shattered; my nights are nights of horror. The end is not far off now. Let it come—I have not lived and worked in vain. The little sum is nearly made up; and I have the means of completing it, if my last reserves of life fail me sooner than I expect. I hardly know how I have wandered into telling you this. I don't think I am mean enough to appeal to your pity. Perhaps, I fancy you may be all the readier to believe me, if you know that what I have said to you, I have said with the certain knowledge in me that I am a dying man. There is no disguising, Mr. Blake, that you interest me. I have attempted to make my poor friend's loss of memory the means of bettering my acquaintance with you. I have speculated on the chance of your feeling a passing curiosity about what he wanted to say, and of my being able to satisfy it. Is there no excuse for my intruding myself on you? Perhaps there is some excuse. A man who has lived as I have lived has his bitter moments when he ponders over human destiny. You have youth, health, riches, a place in the world, a prospect before you—you, and such as you, show me the sunny side of human life, and reconcile me with the world that I am leaving, before I go. However this talk between us may end, I shall not forget that you have done me a kindness in doing that. It rests with you, sir, to say what you proposed saying, or to wish me good morning."

I had but one answer to make to that appeal. Without a moment's hesitation, I told him the truth, as unreservedly as I have told it in these pages.

He started to his feet, and looked at me with breathless eagerness as I approached the leading incident of my story.

"It is certain that I went into the room," I said; "it is certain that I took the Diamond. I can only meet those two plain facts by declaring that, do what I might, I did it without my own knowledge——"

Ezra Jennings caught me excitedly by the arm.

"Stop!" he said. "You have suggested more to me than you suppose. Have *you* ever been accustomed to the use of opium?"

"I never tasted it in my life."

"Were your nerves out of order, at this time last year? Were you unusually restless and irritable?"

"Yes."

"Did you sleep badly?"

"Wretchedly. Many nights I never slept at all."

"Was the birthday night an exception? Try, and remember. Did you sleep well on that one occasion?"

"I do remember! I slept soundly."

He dropped my arm as suddenly as he had taken it—and looked at me with the air of a man whose mind was relieved of the last doubt that rested on it.

"This is a marked day in your life, and in mine," he said, gravely. "I am absolutely certain, Mr. Blake, of one thing—I have got what Mr. Candy wanted to say to you, this morning, in the notes that I took at my patient's bedside. Wait! that is not all. I am firmly persuaded that I can prove you to have been unconscious of what you were about, when you entered the room and took the Diamond. Give me time to think, and time to question you. I believe the vindication of your innocence is in my hands!"

"Explain yourself, for God's sake! What do you mean?

In the excitement of our colloquy, we had walked on a few steps, beyond the clump of dwarf trees which had hitherto screened us from view. Before Ezra Jennings could answer me, he was hailed from the high road by a man, in great agitation, who had been evidently on the look-out for him.

"I am coming," he called back; "I am coming as fast as I can!" He turned to me. "There is an urgent case waiting for me at the village yonder; I ought to have been there half an hour since—I must attend to it at once. Give me two hours from this time, and call at Mr. Candy's again—and I will engage to be ready for you."

"How am I to wait!" I exclaimed impatiently. "Can't you quiet my mind by a word of explanation before we part?"

"This is far too serious a matter to be explained in a hurry, Mr. Blake. I am not wilfully trying your patience—I should only be adding to your suspense, if I attempted to relieve it as things are now. At Frizinghall, sir, in two hours' time!"

The man on the high road hailed him again. He hurried away, and left me.

LEAVES FROM THE MAHOGANY TREE.

RED AND WHITE.

VERY few people know when port wine was first introduced into England. It began to be imported about 1675, when the conquest of Franche Comtè while Turenne's dragoons were trampling down the Palatinate, rendered our shrewd wine merchants afraid of a general war, and a speedy failure in their supplies. The red wine began to pour in faster about 1679—the year of the battle of Bothwell Brig. The war with France in 1689 also gave an impetus to the new trade. The Methuen Treaty of 1703, and the gradual increase of vexatious double duties on the wines of Bordeaux and Lyons completed the transformation, and the drinker of Burgundy and claret became a port wine drinker thenceforward. Let any painter who wants to produce a great allegorical fresco for the cellars of the London Docks, represent Gout and Rheumatism (a grisly pair) sitting together on the chalk-stone cliffs of Dover, smiling a bitter welcome at the arrival of the first vessel laden with port. The date of the last arrival of real port we have found impossible to ascertain.

Pure port is really a sort of Burgundy, pure, fresh, and with a fine bouquet; it is sometimes rose, sometimes purple in colour, perfectly transparent, improving with age. It is excellent mulled (we have performed elaborate experiments on it, and can testify to the fact), but the port sent to England is, as every Portuguese merchant knows, coloured with elderberry juice, and three times mixed with bad brandy—once when half fermenting, to check further fermentation and retain the sweetness; secondly, after racking; lastly, as a farewell dose before shipment. It has been computed by great authorities that a glass of our modern black, sweet, strong port wine contains as much alcohol as two-fifths of a glass of brandy. The natural dark purple, rough, astringent sweet wine, deriving its roughness and sharpness from the husk and seeds of the grape, requires several years ascetic seclusion in the fostering wood to remove its sweetness and coarseness; and some time in bottle to develop its aroma. It ought to be richly tinted as a black ruby, soft, fruity, generous, free from sweetness, and not too astringent. Such was the wine that made Pitt eloquent, that lent wings to the honest words of Fox, and gave fire to the lightning flashes of Sheridan; but who could be witty after a heartburn from modern port?

It is said that the bad port of London taverns can be imitated with any red or white wine, a little Roussillon, elder, or other fruit essence, logwood and spirit, blended with impudence, and vended by rascality. No wine can be so easily adulterated as port, and there is no wine (the best judges say) in which adulteration can be so little detected: new port being naturally coarse, sweet, and rough. Historical wine merchants tell us that this adulteration began about 1720, and increased in 1754. In 1756 a monopoly was granted to the Chartered Royal Wine Company, of Oporto, in order to restrain this abominable practice; but the company soon grew worse than the rogues they had combined to check.

At present, port wine is not merely the juice of the best Alto Douro grapes, grown on the hills round Oporto, but also Colares, Barra-a-Barra, Bucellas, Termo, Arinto, and Lisbon, all mixed together, and then deliberately thickened, fired, and darkened with elderberries, boiled grape juice, and brandy. This stuff is then sent over to England to be again brandied, darkened, and poisoned; for while the wine merchants dilute claret recklessly, they always try to thicken and heat port, until at last, at low public-houses, it becomes mere damson juice, mixed with bad spirit and burnt raisins. It is a fact that no pure port wine can be shipped from Portugal, as the government, Doctor Druitt says, will not give a pass for it, unless it is strong, dark, and sweet enough to mix with other wines, for which purpose it is never really used in England.

The best authorities tell us that the price of good port has doubled in the last fifteen years. After the vine disease, the production of port wine fell off from ninety-two thousand one hundred and twenty-two pipes to seventeen thousand three hundred and fifty-three pipes. In 1864, we imported of this horrible medicine three million three hundred and forty-four thousand eight hundred and seventy-one gallons; and in return the Portuguese took from us one million six hundred and thirty thousand three hundred and four gallons of spirits with which to doctor for our palates. The Portuguese will not drink this new wine; in Lisbon, indeed, it is considered a sort of liqueur, and regarded with furtive suspicion. We should like to know what proportion the whole wine produce of Portugal bears to the quantity of port wine drunk by the infatuated people in England.

What a "deformed fool this fashion is." Port is now a superstition; yet, when the

Methuen treaty first introduced it, Prior, Shenstone, and Pope, all derided the new deep wine, "the sluggish port." Armstrong, who joined in this cry, breaks forth in ecstasy about the wine of France and Germany:

> The gay, serene, good-natured Burgundy,
> Or the fresh fragrant vintage of the Rhine!

And Thomson, a fat man, of epicurean tendencies, passes port to lavish praises on the wine from Gascony and the hills of Lyons:

> The claret smooth, red as the lips we press
> In sparkling fancy while we drain the bowl;
> The mellow-tasted Burgundy, and quick
> As is the wit it gives, the gay champagne.

In spite of the old prejudice that claret is too cold for our northern stomach, it was drunk universally in Scotland long after it had ceased to be the fashionable beverage of England. There are traditions in Scotland that claret used to be taken round the towns in a cart, the driver selling quarts of it from the hogsheads to those who sent their servant lassies with their "tappit hens" and silver tankards.

The wine Burns had fetched for him in "a silver tassie" was claret, and it was claret his heroes of the whistle drank by the pailful. When the duties were altered, in order to force port wine on the Scotch, and drive out the produce of the French vineyards, Home, the author of Douglas, wrote that vigorous epigram:

> Firm and erect the Caledonian stood,
> Old was his mutton, and his claret good.
> "Let him drink port," the English statesman cried:
> He drank the poison, and his spirit died.

We are indebted for the introduction of port to Charles the Second's Portuguese wife. Charles's reign gave us also tea. Fatal gift! The great race of dramatists instantly ceased, and our costume became uglier. The grand oval Elizabethan face went out, and the double chin came in. We all know from Hogarth, the heavy sensual face of the early Georgian time: a lamentable falling off from the former age in intellectual expression and spiritual character. Red port was at the bottom of it, and we wonder that it did not lead to a French revolution in this country, for it established gout, and gout makes people crabbed and fretful, and fretful people don't like paying taxes, and are the planners of all revolutions. There was never a plot yet but a dyspeptic or a gouty man was at the bottom of it.

Let us get rid of this odious superstition of red and white—of what farmers call red port and white sherry—the supposed necessities of all conviviality. Why torment friends with elderberry juice and brandy, because it was the custom years ago to drink port when it was good and cheap? How much better a glass of pure honest hock with a perfume and inner warmth about it, a glass of rosy claret innocent and refreshing, or a bumper of full-toned manly Burgundy pressed from grapes warmed by the fire of southern sunshine! Clarets may be mixed, but then they are purities mixed: not chemical drugs and brandy fused together in the witch's cauldron of the fraudulent chemist. There was some motive in drinking port when port was a generous tonic in age, freed from all the sins and follies of turbulent youth, but now—pah! Let heroes arise among us bold enough to say to their friends after dinner, "I don't keep port now, since it has become so bad and so dear; but here's some hock I can recommend, and here's some fair claret."

It must always be remembered that these mutations in diet, such as the change from claret to port, are not the result of deliberate thought or wise premeditation. They are the result of commercial accident, a war, or a treaty. The change takes place, but no one thinks what the result of the change will be, or whether the new food is wholesome or dangerous. No one cares, when it begins to be fashionable, whether, like port, it will produce gout, and leave gout as a heirloom, or whether, like tea, it will increase nervous complaints, and bequeath weakened nerves. Fashion in this, as in other things, is eminently irrational.

One thing is certain; that the great Elizabethan men, the poets, soldiers, admirals, statesmen, and voyagers, did their work, not on port, but on sherry—pure sherry, probably. With blood warmed and enriched by sherry, they broke up the Armada and defied the Pope and the Spaniard. The stalwart men of earlier and rougher ages were nourished on neither port nor sherry. They drank Gascon wine—claret that is—and quaffed Burgundy. Strengthened by that wholesome liquor, they bore their load of armour, and jousted, tilted, fought, and slashed, from one end of Europe to the other. So as port is not indispensable to a brave man, perhaps in time we may learn to leave this expensive physic, and once more take to the real juice of the grape, before the chemist gets at it.

We scarcely know when sherry and canary first came into repute in England. Perhaps when Henry married Katherine of Arragon, to the horror of all ecclesiastics, she being the widow of his brother Arthur. Certainly not later; though the Spanish predilections of James, and Prince Charles's visit to Madrid in search of a wife, may have given fresh hints to the English wine drinker.

It was Canary (a sort of rich, dry Madeira) that the brave company at the Mermaid drank when old Ben Jonson, and Beaumont, and Herrick "outwatched the Bear;" it was the same amber-coloured cordial that shone in the glasses at the Devil, beside Temple Bar, when the Apollo Room grew electric with the wit of great poets, dramatists, and sages. Shakespeare has left us a glowing eulogy of sack (sec.)—pronounced sherris by the English, in the vain attempt to catch the Arabic guttural X in Xeres. Falstaff, in his sermon on sherry, with the twofold operation, dwells especially on its fire: so, perhaps, even then it was slightly brandied for our coarse market.

"It ascends me into the brain," says the fat knight, glowing with his recent victory over unsuspecting Sir Coleville of the Dale (one of the Derbyshire Colevilles, no doubt) "dries me there all the foolish, and dull, and crudy vapours which environ it; makes it apprehensive, quick, forgitive, full of nimble, fiery, and delectable shapes, which delivered o'er to the voice the tongue, which is their birth, becomes excellent art. The second operation of your excellent sherris is the warming of the blood, which before cold and settled, left the liver white and pale, which is the badge of pusillanimity and cowardice; but the sherris warms it, and makes it course from the inwards to the past extreme; it illuminates the face, which, as a beacon, gives warning to all the rest of the little kingdom man, to arm, and then the vital commoner, and inland petty spirits muster me to their captain, the heart, who, great and puffed up with this retinue, doth any deed of courage, and this valour comes of sherris. So that skill in the weapon is nothing without sack, for that sets it a work, and learning a mere hoard of gold kept by a devil, till sack commences and sets it in act and use."

What a deluge of fancy poured over the simple fact that sherry warms the blood and quickens the action of the brain! The lines, too, so fanciful and witty, are full of the medical learning of the day, when the skull was thought a sort of alembic, when melancholy was attributed to ill vapours, and when the liver was held to be the seat of courage. It will be remembered that in Macbeth Shakespeare calls a coward "a lily livered boy."

The Canaries only produce Teneriffe, Vidonia, and Malvasia, or Malvoisie. Vidonia is a green wine of good body. Teneriffe, a rich sweet wine. As one of the best species of Malaga wine is said to have originally come from the Rhine, and the Chasoselas of Fontainebleau from a Cyprus grape, the Canary vines are said to have come from Germany in the reign of Charles the Fifth. That pleasant letter-writer, Howell, who visited Spain in the reign of Charles the First, declares canary to be "the richest, most firm, best bodied, and lastingest wine, and the most defecated from all earthy grossness." We wish he could taste real Hamburgh sherry prepared by a German Jew wine-merchant in that honest city, after his second bankruptcy. The poor Indian, of untutored mind, never tasted "the real fire-water of the white man" who never tasted that.

Howell (who was perhaps thinking of leaving his glass house and going into the wine business), gets quite excited as he continues to sip and write. "French wines," he says, "may be said to pickle meat in the stomach, but this is the wine that digests and doth not only breed good blood, but it nutrifieth also, being a glutinous substantial liquor." (Then he gets quite chirpy). "Of this wine if of any other may be verified, that merry induction that good wine maketh good blood; good blood causeth good humours; good humours cause good thoughts; good thoughts bring forth good works; good works help to carry a man to heaven. If this be true, surely more English go to heaven in this way than any other, for I think there is more canary brought into England than all the world besides."

This shows that, even in the seventeenth century, Madeira was too strong for the French or Spanish taste, and was chiefly sent to England. There is no doubt that our war with France in the reign of Charles the First, led us to rely more on Spain and the Canaries. Sherry is made of both red and white grapes dried in the sun for two or three days before they are pressed. The various shades of colour are owing to the different proportions of boiled grape syrup with which it is mixed—we all know what it ought to be. If Amontillado, pale, brilliant and with that indescribable flavour that comes accidentally in certain butts at Xeres, and is by some considered a disease. If Vino de Pasto, delicate and high flavoured, not so dry as the aristocratic Amontillado, but still aunque moro hijo d'algo. If Manzanilla, of a delicate straw-colour, with that strange tonic camomile flavour that many people like because it proclaims little alcohol and no acid. If a pure fine sherry, of a rich topaz colour shading into amber, the flavour dry and not sweet, but delicate, soft, and with a calm inner warmth that does not scorch the palate.

But what do we get now, short of sixty shillings the dozen, with the price looking upward ever since the vine disease of 1852, but a fiery, highly brandied wine flavoured with fine sherry, but darkened and enriched with boiled juice, and made piquant with Montilla, Manzanilla, or second-rate Amontillado. That is the doctor's stuff that generates heartburn, it is "hot and sickly sweet." It is a detestable thieving concoction flavoured with the new ethers, and perhaps sent by those Jew German robbers to Cadiz to be re-exported to England. There are instances in which Hamburgh sherry, when examined at the Customs, is found to contain no grape juice at all. Such is the miserable apothecaries' draught, that the poorer middle class in England, who must have their wine cheap, insist on drinking because sherry is an old conventionality, and they will not learn to like claret, hock, or Burgundy, which (as yet) it is worth no one's while to adulterate.

That excellent authority, Dr. Druitt, from careful statistics shows that there is no hope for the man with moderate income ever to get good sherry again in our lifetimes. In 1850, the quantity shipped from Cadiz to Great Britain was three million eight hundred and twenty-six thousand seven hundred and sixty-four gallons; and in 1864, seven million eighty-one thousand and thirty-three, the consumption having latterly increased a the rate of about twelve per cent. per annum. The greater the demand, the more the new unfermented wines that can't travel without

being supported by incessant brandy, are sent to this country.

Awake, middle class! Arise, or be for ever poisoned. Drink the Szamoroduy of Hungary, or the Greek wines, or even that produce of the Sicilian vintage—Marsala. Allow that the last is brandied, that it is earthy, or that there is an odious sub-acid that lingers in the palate after the wine has gone down. These trifles got over, it is a comparatively pure wine, and will improve by keeping. The national wine taste has gone wrong, is going worse, and must be redirected. Red and white are ghosts of their former selves, and must be laid in the Red or White Seas as soon as possible, or there will be no middle-class digestions left in England.

Alas, for the days of beeswing and tawny colour! Alas, for the days when wine left a colourless oil on the side of the glass to trickle proudly down and prove its ancient descent! Alas, for the time when we were brought in after dessert with a frill round our harmless necks, and were given a glass of old port on condition of drinking "Church and King!" Alas, for the day when our rich uncle, after much ceremony and flourish, went down into his cellar himself, and returned cobwebby, white about the arms, but triumphant, with a bottle of 'thirty-two, held as carefully as a tender infant! There are fine traditions about port, but we must surrender them, and start again. We must cast the dust off our feet against that den of thieves, Oporto, and hie (as they say in songs) to the merry vineyards of Johannisberg and Rudesheimer. We must shake hands with the Magyar and propitiate the Greek.

At present, it is not port we are drinking, but potato spirit, elderberry juice and syrup. It is not sherry, but potato spirit, methylated spirit, syrup and dregs. It is making fools of us; we give our birthright for these detestable messes of pottage. We are drinking bad and injurious medicine at the rate of three shillings a bottle, when we had better be taking quinine, tincture of cardamoms, or an honest glass of spirit and water, that is what it pretends to be.

It has often occurred to us that the convivial stories of the Georgian era prove a great falling off in the quality of modern wine. How else can we explain the number of bottles that those gouty old champions of the British Constitution used to put under their girdle? Could William Pitt have gone to the House of Commons after a bottle of our "very curious" port, and there have warmed his chilly heart with the best part of another?

The men then were not stauncher—they could not work harder, or think longer, or ride faster, or walk farther. There was nothing better about the average of them, and yet we find a German traveller describing the sturdy Duke of York as finishing off six bottles of claret at a sitting. This was their special gift, and we wonder at it with an endless wonderment. What a providence that man is so elastic and expandible! The reason why these ancestors of ours drank so much was perhaps this:—First and foremost, the wine was less brandied, it was older and better fermented. Their claret was comparatively good and pure. Their sherry was many degrees sounder, purer, older, and less spirituous than ours. They dined earlier, and sat for many hours over their wine. Let Hogarth's "Midnight Conversation," said to be the caricature of a Fenchurch-street Club, testify how they drank. Look at the piles of empty Florence flasks (the shape of oil flasks) that are heaped on the mantelpiece under the tell-tale clock! And now the wretches, headed by that reprobate clergyman whose thirst nothing can quench, are beginning with crown bowls of punch.

The worst of it is, that the old red and white conventionality gains ground daily in spite of the increased use of the wholesome French and German wines. Luxury has spread, is spreading, and probably will continue to spread, as our national wealth increases, and as our middle class grows more imitative and aspiring in its social habits. A class of people now call for sherry at railway buffets, roadside inns, and country town hotels, who a few years ago would not have thought of anything better than ale, or more recherché than brown brandy. If you call on a country farmer now, he is sure to offer you port and sherry. Twenty years ago he would have drawn a jug of ale. All these new quaffers of sherry are being educated by the honest Hamburgh makers, and, unable from inexperience and blunted senses to appreciate bouquet or aroma, they want the most brandied and the brownest wine they can get. Inflamed by their satanic brewage, they raise their voices to chorus the old ridiculous invective against cold claret and light Burgundy, ignorant that it is the sweet wines and not the sour wines that produce acid, and gout. The power of intoxicating is the test to which these misguided people submit all wine.

The old superstition of white and red has held us long enough. We want once more, pure wholesome Gascon and Lyonnais wine, such as our ancestors, in the red hoods, welcomed from the stately carracks, laden with French purple-stained casks, at Dover or at Southampton. In a word, we want no more B. B., either from Germany or Portugal.

But, to conclude, we should explain what we mean by B. B. Once on a time an epicurean friend of ours used frequently to dine at the house of a certain gourmet of the county—very wealthy, very fond of good eating, very mean and selfish. Our friend (a shrewd man) had often noticed that when the ladies left and the run on the wine became sharper (people drank harder then), the butler came in and whispered to the host: upon which he generally replied, in the most earnest and emphatic way, "Yes, and mind the *B. B.*" This so stirred his curiosity, that on one occasion, being on a visit, and meeting the butler out of doors before breakfast, he got him into conversation, and slipped a guinea into his hand.

"Davis," he said, "I want you to tell me, between ourselves—just as a matter of curiosity, you know—what year's wine that B. B. is that your master so often asks for."

A phosphorescent smile flitted across the face of Davis as he looked round at the house, and then coughed twice. "Lord bless you, sir!" he replied, "B. B.? That's no special vintage, that ain't. Don't you take any of that muck, sir. That's our *bottoms of bottles!*"

SAINT BUMBLE.

The parish of St. Bumble is one of the oldest and most densely populated of the metropolis. It contains numerous narrow streets of little dirty cardboard two-story tenements, which are ill drained, and scarcely supplied with sufficient water to make the tea of the poor people who live in them—or rather the people who are compelled to huddle together in them to be poisoned with foul air and to die.

On account of this, there is a large demand for parochial relief; and the rates of St. Bumble have to pay smartly for his lack of accommodation and cleanliness. His saintship's guardians of the poor are alive to the difficulties of their patron; and they manage their funds as economically as possible, leaving sanitary reform to the vestry—who leave it to somebody else.

Our guardians are all men of responsible positions in the parish. They live well, and know, or pretend to know, what the flavour of good port is like. They have property in the parish, and are consequently interested in its welfare. The chairman had once a stiff tussle with the world, and came off with honour and a nice competency. His compeers have passed through much the same conditions of life. All have pushed themselves forward from small beginnings to comparatively great ends in the useful occupations of publicans, butchers, grocers, tallow-chandlers, cheesemongers, &c. They are good men in the main, but there are two things which often throw their goodness into shadow. First: they find it difficult to understand that in the nature of things it is impossible for everybody to be as successful in life as they have been themselves. Second: a growth out of the first—they are apt in their official capacities to act on the principle that Dives has a right to kick Lazarus, whether he grant or refuse him a crumb.

Scene: the board-room of St. Bumble's workhouse. Ten guardians enter respectively, greeting each other in a jovial manner; laughing and chatting. The chairman takes his seat, the others follow his example, and as they drop on the chairs, their humanity drops from them.

Enter first applicant for relief: A little woman thinly clad, middle-aged, with pinched features, small nervous eyes, and the general bearing of a timid one who regards the world as an enemy. Accompanying her are a boy, aged about fourteen, and a girl, aged about twelve years. The children keep close to their parent and look in awe furtively toward the wise men.

Chairman (loudly): "Well, what's the matter with you?"

Applicant (in a voice made hard by hopelessness): "My husband's been lying ill for six weeks. I go out charing; but now the children are out of work I ain't able to keep things going without help."

Chairman: "You shouldn't have children if you're not able to support them. You've been here before?"

Applicant (sorry for it): "Yes, sir."

Chairman: "Hope you won't come again." (A wish benevolent enough, but sounding like a threat. Then to the boy): "How do you get a living?"

Boy (frightened by the stern eyes bent on him, and which seem to be detecting him in a fib): "I was a light porter, sir; but I've lost my place."

Chairman: "What did you lose your place for?"

Boy (with increasing fright): "I wasn't strong enough, sir, and they got an older boy than me."

Chairman: "You ought to have worked harder, and you'd have kept your place." (To the girl): "And what have you been doing?"

Girl (timidly and clutching her mother's skirt): "I was learning to be a flower-maker, sir, and helping any way I could."

Chairman: "How much did you get for that?"

Girl (half crying): "Three shillings a week, sir."

Chairman (shocked): "And haven't you saved anything? You ought to be ashamed of yourself wasting time learning flower-making. (!) Why don't you go out as a servant? There's plenty of servants wanted in gentlemen's families." (Guardians nod approvingly, and frown on the wicked children.)

Girl (crying): "I can't get a place, sir, or I'd be glad to take it."

Chairman: "Stop blubbering. Two shillings a week for a month. What's the next case?"

Exeunt first applicants, and enter second applicant. A woman in a faded bonnet and a grey threadbare cloak, with which she endeavours to keep an infant warm. She is pale and weakly looking; apparently scarcely able to stand, and deeply sensible of humiliation. She is not offered a seat.

Chairman: "Well, what do you want us to do?"

Applicant (feebly): "My husband died three months ago. I pawned nearly everything we had to pay his funeral, and now I'm starving, and my child's dying."

Chairman: "Then go into the house."

Applicant: "I'm expecting my brother, sir, to come for us in a week or two."

Chairman (sharply): "So much the better. A ticket for a loaf and two shillings a week for three weeks."

Applicant is about to express her thanks,

but finds the words stick in her throat at sight of the indifferent faces around her. Exit.

A guardian (struck with a humane idea, and yawning): "I wonder if the tea is ready?"

Disturbance heard without. Enter relieving officer hurriedly.

Relieving officer: "Here's that Missus Blank again, and she won't go away without seeing the board."

Chairman (indignant): "She's after the hour; she'll have to wait our time. Is tea ready?"

Relieving officer: "Not quite, sir."

Chairman (making a virtue of the occasion with a bad grace): "Then we'll see the woman."

Enter third applicant: a woman of stout build, coarse features, and large red hands.

Chairman (sternly): "What have you been making a noise about?"

Applicant: "If you please, sir, they wasn't for letting me in."

Chairman: "They had no right to let you in—you're behind time."

Applicant: "I mistook the house, sir."

Chairman: "That's none of our business. What do you want?"

Applicant (crying): "My husband's gone away and left me." (Guardians look suspicious).

Chairman: "Send the police after him. What was he?"

Applicant: "A coster, sir, and he's taken away the barrow and left me nothing to get a living with."

Chairman (brusquely): "Get a basket."

Applicant: "I haven't got a farthing atwixt me and starvation, sir, let alone the price of a basket."

Chairman: "Then you ought to get work. There's plenty of work for them that's willing." (Guardians' heads nod in confirmation: "Plenty of work for them that's willing.") "A big strong woman like you ought to be ashamed to ask help from the parish."

Applicant (fervently): "And so I am, sir, God knows."

Relieving officer: "I've had a good deal of trouble with this woman, sir."

Chairman: "She'd better not trouble you much more. Eighteenpence a week for a month, and stop it if she doesn't behave herself."

Exit applicant, and the guardians adjourn to another apartment wherein a table is laid with all the appurtenances of a substantial tea. The guardians are mortal again.

Answer to a remonstrance offered, made by a guardian who was in his own family a kind husband and father.

"Do you expect us to pat them" (the poor) "on the head, call them good boys and girls, and tell them never to mind about work, that the parish will take care of them? Why, sir, it would be a premium upon idleness. I have as much commiseration for misfortune as any man can have; but it is not only misfortune that sends us applicants for relief. More than half of them are idle vagabonds and lazy women. The parish expects us to keep down the poor rate, and we can't do that if we are to make it a smooth and pleasant thing to apply for relief. We can't always distinguish between the deserving and the undeserving, and we are compelled by our position to be sharp and hasty."

That is the guardians' theory, and its error is patent. Granting the difficulty of distinguishing between good and bad, the fact that one man is a vagabond is no argument for treating with indignity an honest man who may be simply unfortunate. Harsh tones and looks can make the simplest words sound very cruelly to the ears of one truly in trouble; but neither harsh words nor grudging gift will deter the scamp from seeking and accepting relief. It is only those who really should be helped, that wince under the sting.

Result: that the object of charity is wholly missed, and the poor-rate is kept down at the expense of the people whom it was righteously intended to serve.

BLOSSOM AND BLIGHT.

[In a letter to the Editor of the Manchester Courier, confirming the report of the extraordinary death-rate in some of the streets and courts of Manchester and Salford (one in ten per annum), Mr. James Higson, rent-collector, of Ardwick-green, Manchester, makes the following heart-touching statement. "As a last resort, old people, before they will enter the workhouse, huddle together in a room let at about a shilling per week, and there die. But they are not natives of the street. No; they were born where the apple-tree blossoms in spring, and the yellow corn waves in harvest."]

For the home 'mid the orchards where blithe the birds sing,
What wonder, dear children, each aged heart craves?
"They were born where the apple-tree blossoms in spring,"
And rippling "in harvest the yellow corn waves."

They are worn the "old people;" they're weary and cold,
Are bent and are broken, are palsied and pale;
And they long for the meadows enamell'd with gold,
And pine for the blooms that scent Blackmore's sweet vale.*

They tremble and totter like babes on their feet,
They are jeer'd and they're jostled, and little boys cry,
"Ho, Gaffer! Ho, Gammer! run fast up the street,
The drums are aye beating, the Queen's coming by!"

They are feeble and famish'd; their faculties fail;
Past labour; past effort; past all but the grave.
Meek brothers in sorrow to list their sad tale,
No friend in the wide world, to succour or save.

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* The apple-orchards in the *Vale of Blackmore* in the south of England, when in full bloom, form one of the most beautiful sights in England: a sea of blossoms rising upon the wind, and for miles scenting the air with a perfume vying in sweetness with that of the bean-flower, rapturously celebrated by the Poet of The Seasons.

In the workhouse, food, fuel, and raiment they say;
The home of the Pauper, they shrink from its gloom:
So, weekly they club their scant halfpence to pay
With the Saturday's shilling, the rent of "a room."

There, childless, and friendless, and joyless, alas!—
They "huddle together," regarded of few;
"Last resort," a garret whose one square of glass
No sunbeam has ever stray'd pitying through:

And each looks on the face of his neighbour in woe,
And silent each quails at that visage of care,
And they think of the eyes that were bright long ago,
And they scan the blank wall with a dolorous air.

Yea; they think of the days when yon crippled and dim
Were stalwart, and blooming, and jocund, and young;
With hope in each bosom, and health in each limb,
And a brow that no sorrow had shaded or wrung.

"Yea, He was once comely; and She was once fair;
"And courtings, and weddings, and christ'nings they'd seen."
"Ay, the streets and blind alleys 'twere hard to compare
With the fields, and the highways, and hedgerows of green."

There were music, and sunshine, and sights that rejoice;
Bright uplands, broad waters, and blue skies above;
And the wood-pigeon's coo, and the mother's soft voice,
As she sang to the babe on her bosom, in love.

They had friends; they had kindred—of home the sweet ties—
Their cradle's companions: their playmates from school:
Blithe greetings, blithe faces, and blithe beaming eyes:
Strong hands and stout hearts, of which Love was the rule.

Long ago! Long ago! And they gaze round their room—
Grime, cobwebs, and mildew—dry-rot and decay;
The air thick with dust, and the light sick with gloom,
And the throb of the engine by night and by day:

For the lark's gush of song in the dew-spangled corn,
The whirr of the spindle they wearily greet;
For the breath of the apple-trees where they were born,
The reek of the chimneys and stench of the street.

For the holly-decked kitchen, a garret dim, drear;
No dresser bright garnished; no cosy fire-side;
No casement to open; no sunlight to cheer;
Sad, sad the last home, where the "old people" bide!

For the winning young faces, the frolic and glee,
For the cheeks like the cherry, the eyes like the sloe;
For the locks like the raven, the step springing free;
Wither'd Eld, nipt with hunger and crazy with woe.

Never more shall they wander through forest and glade;
Never more by the banks of the bright rivers roam;
Never more hear the cuckoo's voice in the dim shade;
Nor cross once again the sweet threshold of home.

There are graves in a churchyard that lies far away,
Amid the lone hills that the clouds rest upon,
Green mounds and grey stones o'er the perishing clay
Of the dear ones for ever lamented and gone.

O might they but lie where their darlings are laid,
One turf at their feet, and *one* text at their head!
O might they but sleep their last sleep in the shade
Of the elms that wave over their long-buried dead!

O might they!—But never—no never—'tis vain!
And they moan in their anguish and clutch the thin air—
Their lot 'midst the scowl of the city, to 'plain,
And lay down the burden of life in despair:

And they turn to the wall, their sad faces death-white,
And heart-broken cross their cold hands on their breast:
Down sinks the red sun; and the shades of the night
Gather o'er the wan traits of the pilgrim—at rest.

* * * *

O apples, red apples, so golden and green,
On the gnarl'd mossy boughs 'mid bright emerald leaves,
In clusters ripe swaying, and tempting of mien,
By the di'mond-paned lattice and thatch'd cottage eaves!

O apples, red apples! Of childhood ye tell,
And the eyes of young urchins that gaz'd with delight;
But the old man is drooping; they're ringing his knell,
And the scenes of his boyhood fade out of his sight.

* * * *

"Where the apple-tree blossoms in spring they were born;"
Where the green-linnet sings, and "the yellow corn waves;"
But they die far away in a garret, forlorn,
And the stithe of the town stunts the grass on their graves.

SLAVES OF THE RING.

Our acquaintance, Mr. Bloxham, is forty-eight years old, and a steady drinker. He has not done a stroke of honest work, he has not performed a single useful action, for more than half his life. To eat and drink well, to wear fine clothes, to swagger in what he called good company, and to eschew anything so ungenteel as labour, were the lofty ambitions of his early manhood. Educated at a public school, and in training for the bar, his father's allowance obtained him a few of these requisites, and his own credit did the rest. A handsome, well-built, rollicking fellow, with a merry eye and a rich, full voice, he soon gained considerable surface-popularity, and had the honour of being dubbed "Jolly Bloxham" in more than one convivial coterie. Just, however, when his acquaintance had become most numerous, and his social engagements and his debts had multiplied in equal proportion, Bloxham succumbed to a phase of human weakness from which the jolliest mortals are not exempt—he fell in love. The pretty, shy-faced,

dove-eyed, modest little daughter of his landlady had somehow reached a stray corner of his jovial heart, and, stooping from his lordly height of social superiority, Bloxham took the gentle creature to himself and married her. Be sure there was a chorus of surprise and indignation and pity from a vast number of people who thought so fine a fellow should have done better. "Thrown up the sponge!" "Married the girl at the lodging-house, and gone to the bad!" "Didn't think he'd been such a fool!" "Thought Bloxham was wider awake!" These and other genial commentaries were passed behind the bridegroom's back by his bosom friends; while on the poor little wife's side one or two hard relations, who had, as they said, "made their own way," shook their heads ominously, and hoped marrying above her wouldn't turn Lucy's head, nor make her sinful. But Bloxham had done a generous thing, and he knew it. Indeed, however unassuming his own nature might have been, and it cannot be said to have erred in that particular, he would have been more than mortal to have ignored this fact. He read admiration for his disinterested chivalry in the silent worship of his trustful bride, in the terms of the congratulatory speeches of his companions, and in the value of the imaginary "good things" he had thrown away. Viewed, however, by the stern cold light of arithmetic, and excluding all fanciful social belongings, the match was not such a very bad thing for Bloxham after all. Lucy's father had been a shopkeeper, it is true, and Bloxham's father was a small country squire. But she had an annuity of seventy pounds a year, whereas, when Bloxham, senior, died, a few months after his son's marriage, his affairs were in such a condition that Letters of administration were taken out by a creditor, and the entire proceeds were angrily squabbled over by that creditor's companions in misfortune. All Bloxham's professional advantages were, in a pecuniary sense, prospective. His showy abilities made him popular, but were not remunerative; and though well fitted by nature for the profession of his choice, all the rest depended upon the self-denial he should practise and the application he should display. He was much too dashing a personage to possess either of those useful qualities, and, to cut his story short, has been maintained, first by Lucy's nimble fingers, and subsequently by her natty little milliner's shop, any time these dozen years.

It was during her husband's first attack of delirium tremens, and after every available article of clothing and knick-knackery had been pawned or sold, that Mrs. Bloxham turned bread-winner; and from that time until now she has provided her husband with the means of indulging in his favourite recreation, besides nursing him through the fits of temporary insanity which that recreation has superinduced. He is at this time a pimply, bloated, watery-eyed, tremulous-handed, dishonest, maudlin, odious drunkard. She is an active, winning, cheerful little body, who, to judge from her bearing in public, might never have known a care, and who still nourishes amid bitter secret tears her pride at having married a gentleman. If Bloxham would but fuddle and bemuse himself without indulging in extraneous vices, his wife would be, strange as it may sound, comparatively happy. That he should get habitually drunk has come to be recognised as part of his nature, and as no more to be guarded against or complained of than if he were cursed with a blighted limb or a deformed frame. This "is poor William's way;" and his cleverness, the delight great people have taken in his society, and his lofty spirited pride, are told over tearfully, as if they were condonations of his offence. But, unhappily, another of poor William's ways is to be generous when in his cups, and, he will lend his jolly name to a boon-companion's bill, or will sign one of those useful instruments himself with a frequency which is ruinous to his wife. But for her husband's amiable weaknesses, and but for his money-borrowing for sustained fits of debauchery, she might long since have retired from business: while, as it is, a weary bitter fight with bankruptcy, a hard struggle to repair the breaches made in her commercial fortress, and a constant dread and anxiety as to the nature of the next assault upon it, are the rewards of as patient and heroic a fight with fortune on her part as was ever celebrated in song. The law of England handed the poor woman over to Bloxham when they went to church together, and in its infinite mercy and wisdom leaves her his chattel long after his vices have transformed him into a sodden and idiotic parody upon a man. The living body is chained to the dead one, and must pay the penalty of its association. Meanwhile, as the vagaries of the wretched toper become more and more reckless, and as in spite of every medical prophecy, that "no constitution can stand it, and the next attack must be the last," he persists in living on, there is little doubt that the Gazette and the workhouse will be the ultimate fate of both.

Another case. Polly Comber earns her two pounds a week at factory work, and is in constant employment. She is cursed with a husband who left her, years ago, but who turns up periodically to break up her home, to sell the bits of furniture she has gathered together laboriously, to seize upon her savings, and then to wallow in the mire again, leaving her to begin her nest-building for herself and the little children anew. In everything which elevates the human being above the brute she is as immeasurably the superior of her ruffian husband as the things of heaven are to the things of earth. She is prudent, self-denying, industrious, cleanly, God-fearing, virtuous. The man she married, is practically changed into a Beast. His individuality is become as distinct from that of the maniac and robber who swoops down upon her from time to time like some obscene bird of prey, as that of the people who lived long before she

was born has become when compared with her child at school. Yet because the hearty, kindly, merry-hearted workman she once loved and has lost won her troth and plighted her his own, she is doomed for all time to bear the burdens which his sullen, foul-mouthed, vicious auti-type may choose to heap upon her. In the worst days of American slavery we used to read of the over-hours by means of which some of the negroes accumulated savings and in time purchased their liberty. More affecting still were the efforts made by the freed men or freed women to purchase back their children. Our English slaves of the ring enjoy no over hours, and the whole of their earnings swell the base gains of their owners, and aggravate their own ill treatment. They cannot purchase their liberty. They cannot purchase the liberty of their children. They are tied body and soul to the demon of drink, or profligacy, or dishonesty, and there is no escape from his lashings and tortures on this side the grave. Our slaves are of both sexes; and the decent workman whose wife drinks, is in the same hapless plight as Lucy Bloxham or Polly Comber.

The law declares that a mistaken estimate of character shall be punished by a life-long sorrow, and many excellent and well-meaning people maintain the law to be right. One of these inveighed the other day from his place in the House of Commons, against interfering with a custom which is the "growth of ages," and with which, as he insisted, are identified in some mysterious manner the welfare of the English people and the prosperity of the country. That the marriage service would have to be altered if Mr. Lefevre's measure became law, and that "enter into a partnership with this man on equal terms" would have to be substituted for "love, honour, and obey," and that a variety of other things of a similarly terrific character would follow in its wake, were among the alarming prophecies launched for the edification of the House of Commons.

That matrimonial misery or family division would necessarily ensue is, however, disproved by the experience of America, and especially of New England. The whole tendency of American legislation, during the last twenty years, has been in the direction aimed at by Mr. Lefevre's bill; and in New England the principle has been in actual operation for the last dozen years. The eminent jurist Mr. Dudley Field vouches that this change has been also effected in the state of New York without any disastrous consequences. It is not found that affection is weakened, or that the natural respect for a husband's authority is withheld, because women are reinvested with —or, rather, are not deprived of—rights which seem justly to belong to every one above the level of a horse or dog. Much that was said against the technical provisions of the measure now before the House may be true. It may be that it is ill adapted for its purpose, and that Mr. Shaw Lefevre's honest gallantry may have overlooked some important objections to its details and probable working. But let the principle be admitted that women are not mere chattels, that it is as possible for them to work, earn, save, and own, in the eyes of the law as it is in sober fact, and all else will follow. To such of our legislators as insist that because the Normans had female serfs whom they called wives, therefore the men of the present day should continue to keep educated and intelligent fellow-creatures with a halter of disability about their necks — to appeal against them to moderation, or humanity, or common sense, seems worse than useless. But the even state of opinion in the House and the casting vote of the Speaker entitle us to hope that the subject will yet receive impartial consideration. The committee appointed to consider it will have ample time to be true to their trust, and if an honest selection of witnesses be made, there can be little doubt as to the result. O! If we could all draw pictures of the men we have known to live meanly or cruelly upon the money earned or owned by their wives, what a wonderful portrait-gallery might be given to the world!

Marriage is to such men, a lottery in which there are all prizes and no blanks, and many of them have lived in as great comfort and luxury upon their commercially better-halves as if they were the most industrious and meritorious of their kind. The wedding-ring has been the magic talisman preserving them from the necessity of labour. Nor would this be such a crying scandal to the community if they could be satisfied with doing nothing. But idleness and viciousness are too closely allied to live separate long, and it follows that the man who lives upon a woman's earnings too often follows in the steps of such fellows as Bloxham and Comber. What circle of middle-class society is there which cannot point to a signal example of this kind? What poor working man or woman is there who, if not sufferers themselves, can point to workers in the same calling, or dwellers in the same street or court, whose lives are permanently made a burden by the operation of the law? There is, Heaven knows, little fear of woman being made unforgiving, or selfish, or unduly grasping, by any enactment that the wise men of St. Stephen's can pass. No human law affecting pounds, shillings and pence, is likely to weaken the law of Nature; and the legislators who trouble themselves concerning the effect of their work, herein, upon the national heart, are like flies dreading the results of their contiguity to the wheel they buzz upon. Let those over-scrupulous gentlemen acquaint themselves with the annals of the poor. Let those professors of the dismal sciences dive below the calm world in which "portions," and settlements, and pin-money (all devices to escape the hard law) are marriage essentials. Let them gauge positions, and remember cases where the slow starvation of helpless children, the bitter mercies of the streets, the foul infliction of brutal wrong, are the conditions of a life from which there is no escape. Let them put themselves in the place of the hardworking

women so situated, and then let them say what they think of the sacred principle of confiscation. This is no sentimental grievance, no suggested extension of woman's rights, which can be condemned as fanciful, no proposition to interfere, however remotely, with the dignity or social privileges of any honest man. It is an attempt at emancipating slaves who are in our midst, and whose sufferings and hardships are not the less severe because they are not made a text for sermons or a theme for platform oratory. Certain well-informed newspapers tell us that the division and the "tie" in the House of Commons upon the second reading of Mr. Lefevre's bill, fairly represent the divided opinion of the country upon the propriety of amending the existing law; and we are placidly congratulated upon the matter having been referred to a committee, and so practically shelved for twelve months. Cannot the intervening time be employed in such a way as to make the result certain?

Mr. Lefevre has already done good service in helping to prevent the wholesale spoliation of our metropolitan commons; he took an active part in the organisation of a Preservation Society under whose auspices the battle of Hampstead Heath is on the point of being fought, with the public rights on one side, and Sir Thomas Maryon Wilson on the other. The author of the Married Woman's Property Bill has experienced the value of extraneous support to parliamentary action, when the strongholds of cupidity, ignorance, and prejudice, are to be assailed. But in his present crusade he can be helped far more easily than in his former. Neither antiquarian research, nor expensive survey, nor professional study of court rolls, nor a weary resuscitation of long-forgotten battles against encroachment is necessary. The first charwoman, or the nearest workshop, will be found replete with evidence. Any day's newspaper will have some sad case in point. If a score of men with leisure were to devote themselves to acquiring information on this one subject, we venture to say their discoveries, when published, would ensure an alteration in the law. Metaphysical hair-splitting as to the precise meaning to be attached to certain words, seems but sorry trifling, in the face of such misery and injustice as pervade the lower ranks of married life; and the first step to improvement is the recognition of those civil rights to which the citizen of either sex is honestly entitled. This is not a question of favour, but of simple abstract justice. Grant all that can be advanced as to the sanctity of the marriage ceremony, and the indissolubility of the marriage tie; grant that its permanence is enjoined by our religion, and essential to the well being of society; none the less, let us in common honesty protect the weak and injured from the effects of a legal and mercantile rendering of a sacred ordinance. To make all that a woman earns or owns, the property of another, is to keep her on the footing of a beast of burden, and that is this right of might almost universally claimed by the Savage all the world over.

GROWTH OF A LONDON MYTH.

Once upon a time, "when I was a little tiny boy," I was brought from the country to a lodging in Kirby-street, Hatton-garden. It was before the railway era, and I travelled by the mail coach, and had a seat with the guard, and the privilege of admiring his red coat and handling his bugle. At that period Kirby-street was not wholly unfashionable. There was then as now a very considerable population of Italians in the neighbouring courts and alleys, engaged in the manufacture of optical instruments, and of plaster images and casts; but Hatton-garden, Ely-place, and Kirby-street, still contained private dwelling houses where native Londoners of a certain social position resided. It was in one of these that I dwelt for about two months, pet and favourite of the kindly and garrulous old lady who was mistress of the establishment. Of all the stories she told me, that of Lady Hatton fixed itself most firmly in my mind, partly because it was tragical and supernatural, but in a great degree because the very stones of the street seemed to prate of it, and Bleeding-heart Yard, a place with a ghastly name and a weird reputation, the scene of the final catastrophe, was within a stone's throw of the room where I sat listening to the dreadful recital. The story was to this effect:

In the reign of Queen Elizabeth there stood in what is now Cross-street, Hatton-garden, the suburban mansion of Sir Christopher Hatton, who by the favour of his sovereign —some people say because he was the most graceful dancer, and not because he was the ablest lawyer of his time—had been advanced to the position of lord high chancellor.

In this house, which was surrounded with pleasant gardens, and appears to have stood in about the centre of a space bounded by Holborn on the south, by Saffron-hill and Baldwin's-gardens on the east, by Leather-lane on the west, and by Hatton-wall on the north, Sir Christopher was accustomed at all proper seasons to hold high revel and entertain the principal people of his day.

When this eminent person was in his sunny youth, when he had neither acquired name nor fame nor royal favour, he was a constant attendant at the theatres of London. Oranges had been in the first year of Elizabeth newly introduced into Europe from China by the Portuguese, and had but recently found their way to England. Then, as now, a trade in the refreshing fruit was carried on both at the doors and in the interior of the theatres. Among the girls who plied this industry was one very handsome person, very poor, but very proud, with beautiful long dark hair, and dark eyes, that could flash either with holy or unholy fire. The gallant Sir Christopher bought some oranges

of her one day, and made her a pretty speech upon the happiness of the man, whoever he might be, who could hope to gain her affections. Thoughtless Sir Christopher! From the moment that her eyes met those of the gay young gentleman the lovely orange girl became the victim of one all-consuming desire. Sir Christopher bought many oranges of her as, every day when he came to the theatre, she threw herself in his path to attract his notice. Every day he made her many little flattering speeches. After a time he became somewhat annoyed to learn that the girl's attachment to him was so obvious as to have become a subject of banter among his friends. He was in no humour for an intrigue. But the colder he became, the warmer she grew. When he retreated, she pursued. When he was indifferent, she was enthusiastic. When he froze, she burned, and desperate thoughts took possession of her mind. It seemed to her as if she could neither live nor die, and that life without his love was infinitely worse than all the pangs of death. At this time, and long previously, The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus—a very doleful ballad—was commonly sung in the streets:

> The Devil in fryar's weeds appeared to me,
> And straight to my request he did agree,
> That I might have all things at my desire,
> If *I* gave soul and body for his hire.

She knew this woful piece of doggerel by heart. If Faustus could find a devil to buy his soul—for the price of love and a term of earthly felicity—could she not find a devil to do her the same good turn? Oh, that she could! For many days and nights she called upon the Prince of Darkness, upon Satan, upon Lucifer, upon Mephistopheles, by every name that she thought powerful, to come to her assistance. There was no answer. At last, upon one cold and rainy night, when she was more than usually desperate and unhappy, she strayed towards the watermen's stairs at London-bridge, and was about to drown herself, when she became aware of a stranger, who was standing by her side. He was a young man in the bloom of beauty, had very sparkling blue grey eyes of the colour of wood smoke, and a thick bushy beard and moustache of a hue between yellow and red, white regular teeth, a smile that was rather haughty and condescending than attractive or fascinating, and such beautiful white hands as might have belonged to a lady, and never could be supposed to have been employed in hard or dirty work. He was dressed in a suit of black velvet—all black from top to toe, with the exception of his hose and shoe ribbons and the jaunty feather in his cap, all of which were of scarlet.

"So you think of jumping into the river," he said, in a grave tone of voice; "but would not that be foolish as well as wicked?"

She started, though she did not in the least imagine who he could be. He looked kind, however, and she simply replied, "I am very miserable."

"But you are young and lovely, and you may yet find happiness, and plenty of it, if you will only seek it in the right manner. I know your history. You love Sir Christopher Hatton. Yes, you love him, and he does not love you in return. A very common case!"

"Mine is no common case," replied the dark-eyed girl, with startling emphasis, looking straight at her visitor. "If he cannot love me, I will die. Life without him is hourly misery."

"And with him would be hourly bliss, of course. I know all that," continued the stranger, very coolly, if not sarcastically. "Listen to me! I am a bliss merchant. I deal in the article. I have a great stock at my disposal."

"Then give me some of it for the love of Heaven," she said, clasping her hands, looking up in his face, and appearing even to his eyes to be exceedingly beautiful.

"Merchants don't *give*," said he. "You, for instance, don't give away oranges! You sell them. Giving is not in my line, or I should soon be a bankrupt, rich as I am; and if I were fool enough to be liberal, it would not be for love of the place you mention."

"Sell me joy, then—sell me the love of Sir Christopher Hatton; make him love me as I love him, and if the bliss can be but mine for seven days, you shall name your own price, even if it be my soul, provided you can get his also, and we can both go into your dark kingdom together."

"Fair and softly," said Lucifer, if it were indeed he, and who else *could* it be? "I can only deal with one person at a time. You and I can do our business first. He and I, if possible, can do our business afterwards. In my little transactions with human kind, I have but one price—which is the soul. Will you sell me yours?"

"I will," she replied, with a slight shudder, "for his love; warm, passionate, undivided, for seven days."

"Stupid girl! you must have a very bad opinion of me, to think I could entrap you into such a miserable bargain as that. No! no! I have some heart and conscience, though you may not believe it. What do you say to seven weeks?"

"Better, oh better!"

"Seven months?"

"Bliss undescribable!"

"Seven years?"

"Oh, do not mock me! If I had seven souls, I would sell them all to you, for such a price as that."

There was not much talk between the two after this. Seven years was the term agreed upon, and the price was to be her immortal soul at the end thereof. The stranger produced a parchment, wrote out the agreement in a very neat lawyer-like hand, read it over to her, and all was ready for her mark. This, as everybody knows, must in such transactions be made with blood.

"You are not afraid of the prick of a needle?" asked her companion, smiling; and before she

could reply, he took hold of her by her beautiful plump arm, squeezed a sharp diamond ring that was on his finger against it, and drew just one drop of red, ripe, rich blood. He produced a pen from his doublet, dipped the point in the liquid, placed it in her hand, and showed her where to place her mark. She did as she was requested. The stranger blew upon the mark to dry it—his breath was hot no doubt — then folded up the document, and placed it carefully in his pocket.

"Now," said he, "fair and noble lady—for I hereby create you a countess—let me see what title would suit you best? The Countess di Sidonia San Felice? That will do! See you don't forget it! You will want a great deal of money. Nothing is to be done without gold. I myself, though I do not value it, cannot manage my business without it. Were there no gold in the world, I verily believe there would be little work left for me. Take this ring, and whenever you want cash, however much or however little, rub it all round with the tip of your right forefinger, and you will find in your purse, or at your feet, the exact sum you have thought of. Just try the experiment."

She took the ring, rubbed it as directed, and said, "One hundred gold pieces." She felt a sudden weight in her pocket, and looked both alarmed and pleased.

"Take them out and count them," said he. "If you had named a million it would have been just the same; but as you would have found the mass rather heavy, I think you need not call for such a quantity, except on the great occasions when less will not suffice. And now, countess, you must act the part of a great lady—I know you can do it—and leave me to work for you in the proper quarter. I will perform my part of the contract like a gentleman. My word is my bond. Having done so—I will not trouble you with my company uninvited—until this day seven years hence, when, whether you invite me or not, I shall come and pay my respects to you. It will be necessary, however, in the mean while, until I have made the man of your choice your own for seven years, which I truly hope may be happy and delicious years to you—on my honour as a gentleman I swear it—that you and I should be sometimes seen together. I am, remember it well, the Duke di Sidonia San Felice, and you are my niece. I shall introduce you into good society. If I am at any time disagreeable to you, or if the thought of our little bargain causes you any annoyance, just give me a look—I am skilful in looks, and need no language to tell a person's thoughts—and I will relieve you of my presence. But don't, for your own sake, try to get rid of me in a pet or temper. And before I say farewell let me give you a word of advice. Don't make love to Sir Christopher. Don't run after him. Don't let him know that you care a straw for him. Let *him* be the wooer. Let him sigh his soul away at your feet; and if you have a little scorn to bestow upon him, not too much, mind you, just a little judicious tiny bit of scorn, dart it at him from those lovely black eyes of yours, and he will come to you as slavishly and affectionately as if he were your lapdog. I am an old stager in these matters, and have been in love myself —a long, long time ago. Farewell, sweet countess!"

The next time that Sir Christopher went to the theatre there was no orange girl to offer him or any one else oranges, at which, to say truth, he was rather pleased than otherwise, for the orange girl, in consequence of the jests of his friends, had become a bore. He met, at the entrance, his friends, the Earls of Southampton and Pembroke, both great patrons of the drama. They asked him if he had seen the new Spanish beauty, who, for the last two days, had dazzled the eyes of all beholders. She had suddenly appeared in London, no one exactly knew from whence, and was accompanied by her uncle, a Spanish grandee and magnifico of the highest class, a grave old gentleman, with a highly intellectual face, who dressed in black velvet, with red hose, and shoe ribbons, wore a red plume in his cap, and a cross of diamonds upon his breast worth millions of money. Sir Christopher had neither seen nor heard; but, entering the theatre, the lady and her uncle were pointed out to him. Such glorious beauty in a woman, such calm dignity and serene wisdom in a man, he thought his eyes had never before beheld. Long before the performances were over he had asked Lord Southampton to introduce him personally to the duke, who had, as he was told, brought letters of introduction both to him and Lord Pembroke. The fair countess was an apt scholar, and before three weeks had passed she had half of the "golden youth" of London at her feet, attracted quite as much by her reputed wealth as by her undoubted beauty. And she possessed, not only these two great magnets for attracting and fixing men's admiration, but a ready wit, and could hold her own worthily against all the beaux-esprits and amiable cynics of the time. The duke, on his part, favoured Sir Christopher greatly, took pleasure in his society, entertained him with his learning, and charmed him with his conversation, for the duke had seen so much of the world, and was such a delicately flavoured cynic, that it was impossible for any one to be long in his society without recognising in him a very remarkable as well as a very charming person. Encouraged by the countenance of this high personage, and daily more and more smitten with the charms of the countess, who gave him, however, but very slight encouragement, while she threw her brightest smiles and most winning glances at some one or other of his many rivals, Sir Christopher became, what the countess had become when an orange girl, head over ears in love. He finally took courage to offer heart and hand, name and fortune, to his brilliant enslaver, and, to his great distress, though scarcely to his surprise—considering from how

many suitors, young, handsome, noble, and rich, she might choose—was summarily rejected.

"I will not be married for money," said the countess, "but for myself alone. Could you love me if I were poor? If, for instance, I earned my daily bread by selling oranges at the doors of the theatre?"

"I could," said Sir Christopher, not without some surprise at the mention of oranges—[a question put to himself without words, "Had she, too, heard that silly gossip about the orange-girl, and was she jealous?"]—"and only wish that you were a peasant girl, with no other dowry than your loveliness and your angelic sweetness of disposition, that I might make you the offer I make now, and prove to you how dearly and how truly I love you."

The countess looked incredulous, though she was beginning to feel very happy; but having, from the company she had lately kept, learned to add the cunning of the serpent to the gentleness of the dove, and thinking, moreover, that Sir Christopher was fast coming into the right road in which she wished him to travel, she dallied with him yet a little.

"I am too young to marry," she said. "I do not know whether I shall marry at all. If I do, I am not sure whether I should like to marry an Englishman. In any case, I cannot marry without my uncle's consent, and I think he objects to Englishmen."

Sir Christopher, as may be supposed, did not lose heart of grace from the results of this conversation. Seeking an interview with the duke, who seemed to take an almost paternal interest in his fortunes, he ascertained that so far from having any dislike to Englishmen—or Englishwomen—this great magnifico esteemed them both very highly—especially the ladies; and next to being a Spanish grandee, he thought it the finest thing in the world to be an English nobleman. He also ascertained—or, rather, hoped he had ascertained—that the saucy countess was not nearly so indifferent to himself as she pretended, and that there was no one among her many suitors upon whom she looked with greater, if with so much favour.

"When I was your age," said the duke, "I was never very satisfied to take no for an answer in matters of the heart, unless I discovered that the superior attractions of a rival had not left me the ghost of a chance. In the latter case I summoned my philosophy to my aid, and cooled myself with it as speedily as I might. It seems to me, signor, that you do not require any cooling at present, and that, on the contrary, a little more heat might possibly be advantageous. My fair niece is, as you may have observed, a proud woman, and the prouder a woman is the more ardently she loves—if she loves at all. That, at least, is my experience. As for proud women, they are my especial favourites. I love them dearly; for of such is *my* kingdom."

The duke and the countess managed so well, and Sir Christopher became so importunate a wooer, that the marriage was agreed upon, and, for a wonder, Queen Elizabeth did not object to it. Higher powers than the majesty of England were at work, and the marriage, though not made in Heaven, was made in a place where a great deal of passionate work is done. It was celebrated with great pomp and festivity, though it was remarked as unfortunate that the good Duke of Sidonia San Felice was taken very suddenly ill on the night preceding the ceremony, and could not attend in church to give away the bride. Sir Christopher considerately and respectfully hinted that the marriage might be delayed for a day or two to permit of the duke's presence. "No! no!" said the duke, "that would be unlucky. Even were I at the point of death, which I am not—though sometimes in my sad moments I feel that I should like to die—I would not consent to be such a mar-joy as that, and to stand between two loving hearts, with my miserable ailments. Go, my son, and get married, and may joy go with you." The duke recovered next day so suddenly, and looked so remarkably well, that ill-natured people (people always *are* so ill natured) began to think it strange, and to recal the fact that no one had ever seen him at church or chapel since he came to England. He was not a religious man, evidently.

Tradition, if her voice were truly represented by the good old dame from whom I gathered this story, has not recorded whether in this instance the course of true love ran smooth, and whether they were happy; but that they lived together, to all outward appearance, as man and wife should, decently and honourably, according to their station, seems obvious, from the fact that Sir Christopher, seven years after the nuptials, gave a splendid ball, of which his wife did the honours, and at which all the notabilities of London were present. Lady Hatton had for the last year been in very indifferent health. She seemed unhappy, but her lord could never understand exactly what was the matter; and though she was attended by the most eminent physicians of the day, the only explanation they could give of her malady was that it was mental, and that she was suffering from some secret sorrow, which she seemed disinclined to divulge. Her uncle had disappeared from England very shortly after her marriage, and explained to Sir Christopher, as a reason for not keeping up a correspondence with him, that he had made up his mind to see the world, to travel to the remotest ends of the earth in search of adventures. "In fact," he said, in a jocose humour, "I am like a roaring lion, I like to go about the earth seeking whom I may devour. I speak metaphorically, of course, and mean *what* I may devour in the shape of new excitement, and fresh experience of men and their ways." He promised, however, to leave Lady Hatton a clue to his whereabout in case he should ever be wanted. But he never was wanted. Sir Christopher mentioned him but rarely, and noticed particularly whenever he did so that Lady Hatton seemed uneasy,

as if she would be glad to banish his remembrance from her mind. Sir Christopher, after an ineffectual attempt to discover whether there had been a quarrel between them, forbore to speak upon the subject after the first two years of their marriage, and had almost forgotten that such a person as the Duke of Sidonia San Felice had ever existed. For the month preceding the great ball Lady Hatton had seemed more than usually unhappy. She could not bear to be left alone even for an instant, and would often break out into hysterical sobs, followed by hysterical laughter distressing to witness.

"Do you think," she said, one evening to Sir Christopher, as they sat in the library, after a day in which some portion of her old happiness seemed to have revisited her, "that there is any truth in the story of Dr. Faustus, who sold himself to Lucifer for worldly power and dominion?"

"A stupid old legend," said the practical Sir Christopher—"an absurd superstition. No doubt people do give their souls to the devil, when they commit sin, persist in sin, and die unrepenting."

"Repentance makes a difference, then?" said the lady. "And suppose I sold my soul to Lucifer, for love of you, and were to repent that I did so, could Lucifer claim my soul?"

Sir Christopher smiled. "My dear good wife," said he, "you are certainly unwell. Your health is injured because you have been left too much alone lately. I shall give half-a-dozen grand dinners and balls, and invite a large company each time. We shall be merry, and you shall be the very queen of all the joy and festivity. Cheer up, love. You have youth, beauty, riches, friends, and your husband's heart. What more do you require?"

"Peace of mind!" she replied, with a shudder, as some painful thought flashed upon her brain, and lighted up her dark eyes with a tragic light. "I have sold myself to Lucifer, or I have dreamt so."

"But who is so silly—pardon the expression—as to lose their peace of mind for a dream?"

"My dream was a reality, or so like a reality that I cannot tell the difference."

"Many dreams are. I have had such dreams myself, especially when I have been out of health. We shall cure all that for you if you will trust to my care and attention." And Sir Christopher gave her as warm an embrace as if they had only been married seven days instead of close upon seven years, and the lady for awhile was comforted.

The great ball at last took place, and it seemed to all present that never had Lady Hatton looked so exceedingly beautiful; that her dark full eyes had never gleamed with such vivid lightning glances upon her hosts of flatterers and admirers, or that her pretty little feet had ever twinkled so elegantly, so joyously, and so deftly in the dance. Sir Christopher was delighted, and convinced, moreover, that, after all, her only ailments were the results of the too great solitude, in which his increasing avocations had compelled him to leave her—a solitude which he firmly resolved, should not continue, if wealth could bring amusement, or change of scene, or any possible recreation that might divert her mind, and occupy her best faculties. It was five minutes before midnight by the great hall clock, when a new and important visitor was announced—no less a person than the long-lost Duke di Sidonia San Felice, in the well-known and graceful costume in which he was so familiar to Sir Christopher, the suit of black velvet, the scarlet hose and shoe ribbons, and the jaunty scarlet plume in his cap. Lady Hatton turned red, then ghastly pale, at the sight, and it was thought by those close to her that she would drop to the ground. But she braced up her nerves as the duke approached her, and took her by the hand. He smiled with a grave sweet smile, and said softly, yet in a voice that all around could distinctly hear: "I am punctual." Then turning to Sir Christopher, he said: "You did not expect me. Of course not! Do not disturb the dance. How lovely your wife looks! She has been a good wife to you, I am sure." Sir Christopher put his hand upon his heart. "I knew she would be," continued the duke. "Such women as she are rare in this wicked world. I have a little bit of family news to communicate to her. We can sit together for a few minutes, can we not, in the ante-room yonder among the flowers? What lovely flowers you have got, Sir Christopher. My taste exactly." He had taken Lady Hatton by the hand, and he led her with the utmost respect and gallantry from amid the crowd. The dance went on, but Lady Hatton never reappeared; neither did the Duke di Sidonia San Felice. After the lapse of an hour, Sir Christopher, not knowing what had become of her, and ardently desiring not to make a scene or a scandal, informed his guests that my lady had been taken unwell, but not seriously, and had gone to bed. The dance went on; every one was joyous except poor Sir Christopher, who was glad when the last of the guests had departed, and he was left alone to ponder over the very singular disappearance of his lady, and to wonder when she would return to him.

In the morning a very horrible sight presented itself in the yard of Hatton-garden. The great pump that stood in the middle was all stained and beclotted with blood and brains, as if some one's head had been dashed and broken against it. On the ground lay a human heart in a pool of blood, and round about were shreds and tatters of female attire, and fragments of gold chains and loose diamonds and other jewels such as had been worn by Lady Hatton on the previous evening. There were no traces of a body, but there was a deep hole in the ground as if it had been made by a thousand thunderbolts, and the whole place smelt awfully sulphurous and mephitic. Lucifer had claimed his own. Thus had ended the bright career of the beautiful but wicked Lady Hatton. And, to this day, added the good old

lady who told me the legend—"Bleeding Heart-yard" stands close by to prove the story true.

It was clearly a case—though it was not till many years afterwards that I was wise enough to understand it—like that of Tenterden Steeple and the Goodwin Sands. The story had not made Bleeding Heart-yard, but Bleeding Heart-yard had made the story. The name impressed the popular imagination, and the popular imagination evolved and produced the legend that was to account for it. And what, asks the practical reader who does not believe in ghosts or devils (though he may, perhaps, have some degree of faith in Mr. Home the medium), is the true origin of "Bleeding Heart-yard?" Two explanations are presentable, either of which may be the correct one. The first is that the ancient names of the wall-flower—that sweet smelling ornament of the garden—that in the Language of Flowers is emblematic of "poverty," were the "Blood-wort" and the "Bleeding Heart," and that one of the yards of Sir Christopher Hatton's residence having been overgrown with it, acquired in early times a name to which later superstition, interpreting too literally, gave a ghastly interpretation. The second is that, in the days before the Reformation, there stood at a corner of the Hatton-garden domain, an inn or hostelry known as "The Bleeding Heart," and that the courtyard of the aforesaid hostelry, when it had ceased to be a hostelry, retained its ancient name among a new generation. "The sign of the Bleeding Heart," says Messrs. Jacob Larwood and John Camden Hotten, in their interesting History of Signboards, "was the emblematical representation of the five sorrowful mysteries of the Rosary, viz., the heart of the Holy Virgin pierced with five swords.

Thus do myths grow; and thus, perhaps, from as small beginnings, combined with the love of the mystic and the supernatural, that seems inherent in human nature, have sprung up nine-tenths of the legends of Greece and Rome and of all the great nations of antiquity.

THE LITTLE OLD GENTLEMAN.

"Would you like to look at the Times, sir? Singular trial that of Risk Allah Bey against the Daily Telegraph."

The speaker was a curious little old man, cleanly dressed, cleanly shaved, with short crisp white hair, and a face like a red pippin: such a face as is hardly ever seen out of this country, and even here rarely, save among farmers, game-keepers, or others who are much in the open air, and at all seasons. This little—for he was very small indeed as to size—this little old gentleman, was encountered in a first-class smoking-carriage, on the South-Western Railway.

"Curious trial that before the Lord Chief Justice," continued the old gentleman, as if he wished to promote further conversation. "I was once tried for murder myself:" with a pleasant smile. "Yes," said the little old gentleman, "and" (looking pleasanter than ever), "very nearly hung, too. I did not get off free. I was sentenced to transportation for life; went through seven years of it; and then they pardoned me for what I had never done.

"You see," said the little old gentleman, smiling more than ever, as the five other smokers in the carriage stared at him: "You see, I was for many years a cattle-merchant in London. My business consisted in receiving from abroad—from Holland, Germany, Normandy, or wherever I could form a connexion—oxen, cows, sheep, pigs, some on my own account, others to be sold on commission for correspondents who sent their animals to me for sale. The trade was a profitable one. Every beast sent over on my account was fully insured, so that if it died on its passage I came upon the insurance company. I had very few bad debts; and, taking one thing with another, I may fully have calculated upon realising at least twenty-five per cent on my capital every three months. In other words, I got a profit of a hundred per cent per annum on the money I had commenced business with.

"But with money comes the desire for more. There was a time before I began to deal in cattle, when I thought myself rich if at the end of a year I had a couple of hundred pounds in bank over and above my expenses for the past twelve months. Now it was otherwise. I lamented that I had not always an idle balance of fifteen hundred or two thousand pounds. I was fond of money for money's sake. I could not make money fast enough for my wishes, in the cattle trade, and therefore determined to do a little in the loan and discounting way.

"It is nearly twenty years ago, and I have gone through a deal of trouble since. My system was never to put too many eggs in one pot—never to lend very much to any single person—but to lend many small amounts to various people. I used to answer the advertisements of tradesmen in difficulties, and, if I found that a borrower had good security to offer, I would lend him perhaps thirty or forty pounds, taking ten pounds for the accommodation for a month, and much more in proportion for longer periods. One of my clients was a printer with a small business, near what was then called the New-road, now Marylebone-road. He had often borrowed twenty, thirty, and once as much as sixty pounds from me, and had always repaid me to the day. The security he gave me was always the same, the joint note of hand of himself and his brother, a grocer up Hackney way. The name of this borrower was Strange—Edward Strange. He was in a delicate state of health, always suffering from his chest, and in severe winters he used to be laid up for weeks together with a bad cough. He was a widower, without children.

"One day Strange came to me and said that he had a very excellent offer to enter into partnership with a printer, who had been esta-

blished in business several years. The sum required to be paid for the partnership was three hundred pounds, and he asked me to advance him that amount upon the security of a policy of insurance for one thousand pounds upon his own life. On inquiry, I found that, years before, Strange had, when a young and healthy man, effected an insurance upon his life for five hundred pounds, and afterwards increased it to one thousand pounds. This policy he had always managed to keep up, and still wished that it should not relapse. As it had been running on for nearly twenty years, and as he paid a very small premium, and was now in bad health, the insurance company would have been glad to purchase it back. Therefore, after looking at the affair in every possible way, I came to the conclusion that the security was good, and that I might safely advance the sum of three hundred pounds upon the security of the policy being endorsed over to me. This was done, and I advanced the money! Gentlemen, the worst day's business I ever did in my life.

"In general a creditor sees but little of his debtors, whether they are few or many. The man who owes money generally avoids the individual to whom he owes it. But it happened otherwise with Strange and myself. With the new business that he had bought, he was not expected, nor even wished, by his partner to interfere; and his own indifferent health made it very desirable that he should be as free as possible from the confined air of the close printing rooms. The partnership he had purchased secured him a certain amount of income, which, together with what he had besides, allowed him to go about in divers parts of the country, travelling being much recommended by his medical attendant. Knowing that I had to make weekly trips to Harwich, and that I had often to go to Rotterdam in the way of business when looking after cattle, he asked me whether he could be of use to me as a clerk? He asked for no salary, only his actual travelling expenses; and for this he was to keep my accounts, write and copy my letters, and make himself generally useful. The bargain was a good one for both parties. On the one hand my business was increasing every week, and having to knock about a great deal at fairs, and to see a great many dealers, I had no time to look properly after my accounts, which sometimes got rather complicated. On the other hand, Strange had enough to live upon, but not enough to pay travelling expenses with comfort. Having been friends for several years, when we travelled together we always had our meals in common; and in country places, or where the inns were very full, we generally took a double-bedded room between us.

"After a time I found Strange's assistance of such value to me that I was able to increase my connexions very materially indeed. Being a shrewd man, he was able at the end of a twelvemonth to make purchases and conduct my business as well as I could. This led, naturally enough, to a partnership being formed between us, by the terms of which I was to lend him five hundred pounds to put into the business, of which he was to have a fourth of the net profits. As surety for the five hundred pounds, he insured his life for another thousand. Thus, when we commenced working together as partners, Strange owed me eight hundred pounds, and I held policies of insurance on his life for two thousand pounds.

"Our business trips used generally to last from a week to a fortnight. Sometimes we were detained at the port to which we had brought the animals, for four or five days, awaiting the means of shipping them to England; for it is not every steamer that will take bullocks, or sheep, or pigs, as cargo. Sometimes, one of us would remain in London conducting the sales of such animals as his partner sent him from abroad. And this had happened when the event of which I am now going to tell you took place.

"As Strange could speak French very well, I often sent him alone to the fairs in Normandy and Britanny, nearly always going myself to those in Holland and the north of Germany. It was somewhere about the end of a certain May that he went over to France, intending to remain there about six weeks, and go from one fair to another on a certain round. Three or four consignments of beasts had reached me in London, and the last was to come over in a day or two. My partner had visited all the fairs he intended to go to, and was to join me. I wrote him at Southampton, where he was to land, saying that I would meet him there, take a look at the cattle he had bought, and send some to London, and go with the rest to some of the southern counties, where there was likely to be a market that would suit my book.

"I reached Southampton on the day named, and met Strange. We dined together in the afternoon at a small inn near the docks, and, finding we could not get two bedrooms, engaged a double-bedded room for the night. Then we began to square up accounts and spent the afternoon seeing how we stood in the matter of money. But something that Strange had done, vexed me sorely. He had, in the face of what I had written to him in London to the contrary, paid some two pounds a head more for about thirty or forty beasts than we should ever realise. When I told him how foolishly he had acted, he answered me back that he had done his best, and that he had as much right as I had to speculate with our joint funds. To this I replied that, although he was undoubtedly a partner in the concern, it was I who had put in all the capital, and that he had only an interest of twenty-five per cent. in the profits. His rejoinder, I remember well. He said that if he died, I would get all the money he owed me and more. To this I retorted in a passion, that I knew it, and that I did not care how soon he died. All this wrangling took place in the coffee-room of the inn, before the girl who waited on us, the

cook of the house, the barmaid, the landlady, and the landlady's husband. The latter, when he saw we were getting angry, tried to make friends between us, but in vain. We were each annoyed at what the other had said, as well as at our own folly, and neither would be the first to say he was sorry for what had passed.

About six o'clock I took up my hat and went to see some friends in the town. When I got back it was past eleven o'clock, and Strange, the housemaid told me, had been in bed and asleep more than an hour. I paid my share of the bill, for I intended starting early, went up-stairs, found Strange fast asleep, and went to bed myself. Next morning I was called at five, packed my bag, swallowed a cup of coffee, and in half an hour was on my way to London. On leaving the inn I told the porter that my companion was asleep, and that, as he was only going by the ten o'clock coach to Brighton, they need not call him yet. I should not forget to tell you that while I was dressing in the morning Strange awoke, and that we shook hands over our dispute of the previous day. We moreover agreed to change our plans, and Strange was to meet me in London on the next day. As I was closing my carpet-bag he asked me to lend him one of my razors: a thing which I had the greatest objection to (for if I am particular about anything I possess, it is about my razors), but having only just made up my difference with him, I could hardly refuse him so small a favour.

"The days I am writing of were before railways had extended to Southampton. Leaving the latter place at half-past five in the morning, it was half-past six in the evening before I got to town. I went to bed, got up next day, and, while I was sitting at breakfast with my wife, our servant told me that two gentlemen wished to speak to me. I went down to see them, and, before I could open my mouth to ask them what they wanted, found myself with handcuffs on, arrested for the murder of Edward Strange.

"It seems that, finding Strange did not come down by half-past nine, the porter went up to call him. He found the door locked, but no key in it. After knocking some time on the outside, the door was broken open, and poor Strange was found, with his throat cut from ear to ear, and a razor in his hand. The key of the door was afterwards found in the coffee-room, under the very bench on which I had sat to drink my cup of coffee before starting.

"I was brought before the magistrate at Bow-street the next morning, and was by him sent down to Southampton to await the result of the coroner's inquest upon my partner. The verdict was wilful murder, and, after commitment by the magistrate to the sessions, I was put on trial for my life at Winchester.

"The trial lasted only a few hours. It was fully proved that Strange and myself had quarrelled and had high words the night before, and that I had said I did not care how soon he died, so that I could recover the money I had lent him. A great deal was made of the fact that by Strange's death I should be entitled to the insurance upon his life to the amount of two thousand pounds, by which I should be a clear gainer of one thousand two hundred. It was further shown that the razor found in poor Strange's hand was mine, and three medical men declared their conviction that, although that instrument was undoubtedly used to kill the dead man, it must have been placed in his hands after death. Moreover, there were not only evident marks of a struggle about the bed and bedclothes, but Strange's throat was cut from right to left, which no one could have done unless he had been a left-handed man, which Strange was not. Then, again, the fact of the bedroom door being locked, and the key hid close to where I had breakfasted, told fearfully against me. It was clear that Strange could not by any possibility have cut his own throat, and then locked the door of his room on the outside. It was attempted by my counsel, to throw discredit upon this part of the evidence. The learned gentleman tried very hard to elicit something which might even lead the jury to imagine that the door had been locked after the murder, and that some person unknown had unknowingly let the key drop in the coffee-room. But it was of no avail whatever. It was clearly proved that the key had been inside the door when I went up to bed, and that it had never been seen again until it was found in the coffee-room. My defence tried hard to make out that some person likely to commit the murder might have been in the house on that day, but all of no use. As the trial went on, even I, who knew my innocence, could not help allowing to myself that the evidence, though purely circumstantial, was very strong against me. The only points in my favour were, that, on the day of the murder I was supposed to have committed, I travelled up to London, and had not the least appearance of a man who had anything on his mind. Again, Strange was known to have had on his person a gold watch, and a purse containing a few sovereigns and twenty five-pound notes, the numbers of which latter were ascertained at the bank at Southampton, where he had procured them in exchange for a bank-post bill. The watch had been taken, and was never traced; the sovereigns had also disappeared; but the bank-notes had been exchanged at the Bank of England on the day after the murder, and before I, as I fully proved, had any communication whatever with any one in London. Of this last point my counsel made the most, but it did not help me much, if anything. The jury retired, and, after deliberating about half an hour, returned into court and declared, through their foreman, that I was guilty of the wilful murder of Edward Strange.

"Gentlemen, a man who has gone through that ordeal—who has heard the jury pronounce him guilty of capital crime, and heard the judge pass sentence of death upon him—a man, I say, gentlemen, who has gone through that ordeal, and still lives to tell the tale, may (or am I pre-

sumptuous?) be looked upon as a man who has really gone through what, in these days, would be called a sensational time. I heard every word the foreman of the jury said, and found myself wondering what the judge's black cap—of which every one has heard, but few have seen—would be like. Then I was in a kind of dream for a time, until I heard the words condemning me to be hanged by the neck until I was dead. A sensational effect upon me, gentlemen, or am I presumptuous? And will you favour me, sir, with a light?

"In spite of appearances," said this little old gentleman, smoking with exceeding relish, "my friends did not believe me to be guilty of the fearful crime for which I was to be hanged by the neck until I was dead, in ten days after the trial. They moved heaven and earth to obtain a commutation of my sentence, and, after a great deal of trouble, they succeeded. At the time of which I speak, there was in England a temporary, but very strong, reaction against capital punishment. I cannot recollect all the circumstances of the case, but in a trial for murder two men had been condemned to death and duly executed, and shortly after *they* had been hanged by the neck until *they* were dead their supposed victim made his appearance, well and hearty. The public press took up the question of not hanging upon circumstantial evidence, and I benefited to the extent of my life by the temporary excitement. I was respited, and condemned to transportation for life, and very shortly afterwards—for in those days transportation was in full swing—found myself on my way out to Van Diemen's Land, a convict 'lifer.'

"For seven long years, gentlemen, did I undergo this punishment for a crime of which I was perfectly innocent. Curiously enough, the man who really had murdered poor Strange, as he afterwards confessed, went out in the same ship with me, condemned to seven years' transportation for burglary. He must have heard me tell my story and declare my innocence over and over again; for in the colony we worked a long time together in the same gang. He was afterwards assigned to a master who lived near the prison where I had to slave out my time, as in those days 'lifers,' whose sentence had been commuted for capital punishment, were never allowed to leave the chain gangs. But, after three years in Van Diemen's Land, this real murderer took to his old trade of burglary. To avoid being captured, he fled to the bush, and on a party of police being sent after the band to which he belonged, he shot a constable in cold blood. He was captured, sentenced to be hanged by the neck until *he* was dead, and two days before his execution confessed that he had murdered, at Southampton, a person called Strange, for which offence another man had been sentenced to death. His statement was taken down, and it was exact. It appeared that he had been hidden for several hours in the inn, intending to steal whatever he could lay his hands on. Early in the morning he had found his way into poor Strange's room, hoping to pick up something before the house was astir. But his entrance awoke Strange, who struggled for a few minutes with him, and kept hold of him. The razor which I had lent Strange being still lying on the bed, he murdered his victim with it, and then put it into Strange's hand, in order to make it appear that he had committed suicide. He secured the watch, the purse, and the bank-notes, of the murdered man, and stole out of the house, locking the door of the bedroom on the outside, and hiding the key. He declared that he had got into Strange's room before I left the house, and that for some time after his fear was lest I should come back. Had I done so, the murder would, in all probability, have been prevented.

"When the statement made by this convict had been duly verified, and when certain references had been made to the home authorities, I was duly liberated. That is to say, gentlemen, I obtained the royal pardon for having committed a crime which I never committed. And very sensible I am, gentlemen, of the royal clemency. Though it seems odd."

"All tickets, gentlemen, all tickets ready!"

The train had reached the ticket platform at Vauxhall.

"Ah! Yes!" said the little old gentleman, producing his: "Mine's a Return Ticket; but it had very nearly been otherwise!"

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THE MOONSTONE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WOMAN IN WHITE," &c. &c.

SECOND PERIOD. THE DISCOVERY OF THE TRUTH. (1848—1849.)

THIRD NARRATIVE.

THE NARRATIVE OF FRANKLIN BLAKE.

CHAPTER X.

How the interval of suspense to which I was now condemned might have affected other men in my position, I cannot pretend to say. The influence of the two hours' probation upon *my* temperament, was simply this. I felt physically incapable of remaining still in any one place, and morally incapable of speaking to any one human being, until I had first heard all that Ezra Jennings had to say to me.

In this frame of mind, I not only abandoned my contemplated visit to Mrs. Ablewhite—I even shrank from encountering Gabriel Betteredge himself.

Returning to Frizinghall, I left a note for Betteredge, telling him that I had been unexpectedly called away, for a few hours, but that he might certainly expect me to return towards three o'clock in the afternoon. I requested him, in the interval, to order his dinner at the usual hour, and to amuse himself as he pleased. He had, as I well knew, hosts of friends in Frizinghall; and he would be at no loss how to fill up his time until I returned to the hotel.

This done, I made the best of my way out of the town again, and roamed the lonely moorland country which surrounds Frizinghall, until my watch told me that it was time, at last, to return to Mr. Candy's house.

I found Ezra Jennings, ready and waiting for me.

He was sitting alone in a bare little room, which communicated by a glazed door with a surgery. Hideous coloured diagrams of the ravages of hideous diseases, decorated the barren buff-coloured walls. A book-case filled with dingy medical works, and ornamented at the top with a skull, in place of the customary bust; a large deal table copiously splashed with ink; wooden chairs of the sort that are seen in kitchens and cottages; a threadbare drugget in the middle of the floor; a sink of water, with a basin and waste-pipe roughly let into the wall, horribly suggestive of its connexion with surgical operations—comprised the entire furniture of the room. The bees were humming among a few flowers placed in pots outside the window; the birds were singing in the garden; and the faint intermittent jingle of a tuneless piano in some neighbouring house, forced itself now and again, on the ear. In any other place, these everyday sounds might have spoken pleasantly of the everyday world outside. Here, they came in as intruders on a silence which nothing but human suffering had the privilege to disturb. I looked at the mahogany instrument case, and at the huge roll of lint, occupying places of their own on the bookshelves, and shuddered inwardly as I thought of the sounds, familiar and appropriate to the everyday use of Ezra Jennings's room.

"I make no apology, Mr. Blake, for the place in which I am receiving you," he said. "It is the only room in the house, at this hour of the day, in which we can feel quite sure of being left undisturbed. Here are my papers ready for you; and here are two books to which we may have occasion to refer, before we have done. Bring your chair to the table, and we shall be able to consult them together."

I drew up to the table; and Ezra Jennings handed me his manuscript notes. They consisted of two large folio leaves of paper. One leaf contained writing which only covered the surface at intervals. The other presented writing, in red and black ink, which completely filled the page from top to bottom. In the irritated state of my curiosity, at that moment, I laid aside the second sheet of paper in despair.

"Have some mercy on me!" I said. "Tell me what I am to expect, before I attempt to read this."

"Willingly, Mr. Blake! Do you mind my asking you one or two more questions?"

"Ask me anything you like!"

He looked at me with the sad smile on his lips, and the kindly interest in his soft brown eyes.

"You have already told me," he said, "that you have never—to your knowledge—tasted opium in your life."

"To my knowledge?" I repeated.

"You will understand directly, why I speak with that reservation. Let us go on. You are not aware of ever having taken opium. At this time, last year, you were suffering from

nervous irritation, and you slept wretchedly at night. On the night of the birthday, however, there was an exception to the rule—you slept soundly. Am I right, so far?"

"Quite right."

"Can you assign any cause for your nervous suffering, and your want of sleep?"

"I can assign no cause. Old Betteredge made a guess at the cause, I remember. But that is hardly worth mentioning."

"Pardon me. Anything is worth mentioning in such a case as this. Betteredge attributed your sleeplessness to something. To what?"

"To my leaving off smoking."

"Had you been an habitual smoker?"

"Yes."

"Did you leave off the habit suddenly?"

"Yes."

"Betteredge was perfectly right, Mr. Blake. When smoking is a habit, a man must have no common constitution who can leave it off suddenly without some temporary damage to his nervous system. Your sleepless nights are accounted for, to my mind. My next question refers to Mr. Candy. Do you remember having entered into anything like a dispute with him—at the birthday dinner, or afterwards—on the subject of his profession?"

The question instantly awakened one of my dormant remembrances, in connection with the birthday festival. The foolish wrangle which took place, on that occasion, between Mr. Candy and myself, will be found, described at much greater length than it deserves, in the tenth chapter of Betteredge's Narrative. The details there presented of the dispute—so little had I thought of it afterwards—entirely failed to recur to my memory. All that I could now recal, and all that I could tell Ezra Jennings was, that I had attacked the art of medicine at the dinner-table, with sufficient rashness and sufficient pertinacity to put even Mr. Candy out of temper for the moment. I also remembered that Lady Verinder had interfered to stop the dispute, and that the little doctor and I had "made it up again," as the children say, and had become as good friends as ever, before we shook hands that night.

"There is one thing more," said Ezra Jennings, "which it is very important that I should know. Had you any reason for feeling any special anxiety about the Diamond, at this time last year?"

"I had the strongest reasons for feeling anxiety about the Diamond. I knew it to be the object of a conspiracy; and I was warned to take measures for Miss Verinder's protection, as the possessor of the stone."

"Was the safety of the Diamond the subject of conversation between you and any other person, immediately before you retired to rest on the birthday night?"

"It was the subject of a conversation, between Lady Verinder and her daughter——"

"Which took place in your hearing?"

"Yes."

Ezra Jennings took up his notes from the table, and placed them in my hands.

"Mr. Blake," he said, "if you read those notes now, by the light which my questions and your answers have thrown on them, you will make two astounding discoveries, concerning yourself. You will find:—First, that you entered Miss Verinder's sitting-room and took the Diamond, in a state of trance, produced by opium. Secondly, that the opium was given to you by Mr. Candy—without your own knowledge—as a practical refutation of the opinions which you had expressed to him at the birthday dinner."

I sat, with the papers in my hand, completely stupefied.

"Try, and forgive poor Mr. Candy," said the assistant gently. "He has done dreadful mischief, I own; but he has done it innocently. If you will look at the notes, you will see that—but for his illness—he would have returned to Lady Verinder's the morning after the party, and would have acknowledged the trick that he had played you. Miss Verinder would have heard of it, and Miss Verinder would have questioned him—and the truth which has laid hidden for a year, would have been discovered in a day."

I began to regain my self-possession. "Mr. Candy is beyond the reach of my resentment," I said angrily. "But the trick that he played me is not the less an act of treachery, for all that. I may forgive, but I shall not forget it."

"Every medical man commits that act of treachery, Mr. Blake, in the course of his practice. The ignorant distrust of opium (in England) is by no means confined to the lower and less cultivated classes. Every doctor in large practice finds himself, every now and then, obliged to deceive his patients, as Mr. Candy deceived you. I don't defend the folly of playing you a trick under the circumstances. I only plead with you for a more accurate and more merciful construction of motives."

"How was it done?" I asked. "Who gave me the laudanum, without my knowing it myself?"

"I am not able to tell you. Nothing relating to that part of the matter dropped from Mr. Candy's lips, all through his illness. Perhaps, your own memory may point to the person to be suspected?"

"No."

"It is useless, in that case, to pursue the inquiry. The laudanum was secretly given to you in some way. Let us leave it there, and go on to matters of more immediate importance. Read my notes, if you can. Familiarise your mind with what has happened in the past. I have something very bold and very startling to propose to you, which relates to the future."

Those last words roused me.

I looked at the papers, in the order in which Ezra Jennings had placed them in my hands. The paper which contained the smaller quantity of writing was the uppermost of the two. On this, the disconnected words, and fragments of

sentences, which had dropped from Mr. Candy in his delirium, appeared as follows:

". . . Mr. Franklin Blake . . . and agreeable . . . down a peg . . . medicine . . . . confesses . . . sleep at night . . . tell him . . . out of order . . . medicine . . . he tells me . . . and groping in the dark mean one and the same thing . . . all the company at the dinner-table . . . I say . . . groping after sleep . . . nothing but medicine . . . he says . . . leading the blind . . . know what it means . . . witty . . . a night's rest in spite of his teeth . . . wants sleep . . . Lady Verinder's medicine chest . . . five-and-twenty minims . . . without his knowing it . . . to-morrow morning . . . Well, Mr. Blake . . . medicine today . . . never . . . without it . . . out, Mr. Candy . . . excellent . . . without it . . . down on him . . . truth . . . something besides . . . excellent . . . dose of laudanum, sir . . . bed . . . what . . . medicine now."

There, the first of the two sheets of paper came to an end. I handed it back to Ezra Jennings.

"That is what you heard at his bedside?" I said.

"Literally and exactly what I heard," he answered—"except that the repetitions are not transferred here from my short-hand notes. He reiterated certain words and phrases a dozen times over, fifty times over, just as he attached more or less importance to the idea which they represented. The repetitions, in this sense, were of some assistance to me in putting together those fragments. Don't suppose," he added, pointing to the second sheet of paper, "that I claim to have reproduced the expressions which Mr. Candy himself would have used if he had been capable of speaking connectedly. I only say that I have penetrated through the obstacle of the disconnected expression, to the thought which was underlying it connectedly, all the time. Judge for yourself."

I turned to the second sheet of paper, which I now knew to be the key to the first.

Once more, Mr. Candy's wanderings appeared, copied in black ink; the intervals between the phrases being filled up by Ezra Jennings in red ink. I reproduce the result here, in one plain form; the original language and the interpretation of it coming close enough together in these pages to be easily compared and verified.

". . . Mr. Franklin Blake is clever and agreeable, but he wants taking down a peg when he talks of medicine. He confesses that he has been suffering from want of sleep at night. I tell him that his nerves are out of order, and that he ought to take medicine. He tells me that taking medicine and groping in the dark mean one and the same thing. This before all the company at the dinner-table. I say to him, you are groping after sleep, and nothing but medicine can help you to find it. He says to me, I have heard of the blind leading the blind, and now I know what it means. Witty—but I can give him a night's rest in spite of his teeth. He really wants sleep; and Lady Verinder's medicine chest is at my disposal. Give him five and twenty minims of laudanum to-night, without his knowing it; and then call to-morrow morning. 'Well, Mr. Blake, will you try a little medicine to day? You will never sleep without it.'—'There you are out, Mr. Candy: I have had an excellent night's rest without it.' Then, come down on him with the truth! 'You have had something besides an excellent night's rest; you had a dose of laudanum, sir, before you went to bed. What do you say to the art of medicine, now?'"

Admiration of the ingenuity which had woven this smooth and finished texture out of the ravelled skein, was naturally the first impression that I felt, on handing the manuscript back to Ezra Jennings. He modestly interrupted the first few words in which my sense of surprise expressed itself, by asking me if the conclusion which he had drawn from his notes was also the conclusion at which my own mind had arrived.

"Do you believe as I believe," he said, "that you were acting under the influence of the laudanum in doing all that you did, on the night of Miss Verinder's birthday, in Lady Verinder's house?"

"I am too ignorant of the influence of laudanum to have an opinion of my own," I answered. "I can only follow your opinion, and feel convinced that you are right."

"Very well. The next question is this. You are convinced; and I am convinced—how are we to carry our conviction to the minds of other people?"

I pointed to the two manuscripts, lying on the table between us. Ezra Jennings shook his head.

"Useless, Mr. Blake! Quite useless, as they stand now, for three unanswerable reasons. In the first place, those notes have been taken, under circumstances entirely out of the experience of the mass of mankind. Against them, to begin with! In the second place, those notes represent a medical and metaphysical theory. Against them, once more! In the third place, those notes are of *my* making; there is nothing but *my* assertion to the contrary, to guarantee that they are not fabrications. Remember what I told you on the moor—and ask yourself what my assertion is worth. No! my notes have but one value, looking to the verdict of the world outside. Your innocence is to be vindicated; and they show how it can be done. We must put our conviction to the proof—and You are the man to prove it."

"How?" I asked.

He leaned eagerly nearer to me across the table that divided us.

"Are you willing to try a bold experiment?"

"I will do anything to clear myself of the suspicion that rests on me now."

"Will you submit to some personal inconvenience for a time?"

"To any inconvenience, no matter what it may be."

"Will you be guided implicitly by my advice?

It may expose you to the ridicule of fools; it may subject you to the remonstrances of friends whose opinions you are bound to respect——"

"Tell me what to do!" I broke out impatiently. "And, come what may, I'll do it."

"You shall do this, Mr. Blake," he answered. "You shall steal the Diamond, unconsciously, for the second time, in the presence of witnesses whose testimony is beyond dispute?"

I started to my feet. I tried to speak. I could only look at him.

"I believe it *can* be done," he went on. "And it *shall* be done—if you will only help me. Try to compose yourself—sit down, and hear what I have to say to you. You have resumed the habit of smoking; I have seen that for myself. How long have you resumed it?"

"For nearly a year."

"Do you smoke more, or less, than you did?"

"More."

"Will you give up the habit again? Suddenly, mind!—as you gave it up before."

I began dimly to see his drift. "I will give it up, from this moment," I answered.

"If the same consequences follow, which followed last June," said Ezra Jennings—"if you suffer once more as you suffered then, from sleepless nights, we shall have gained our first step. We shall have put you back again into something assimilating to your nervous condition on the birthday night. If we can next revive, or nearly revive, the domestic circumstances which surrounded you; and if we can occupy your mind again with the various questions concerning the Diamond which formerly agitated it, we shall have replaced you, as nearly as possible, in the same position, physically and morally, in which the opium found you last year. In that case we may fairly hope that a repetition of the dose will lead, in a greater or lesser degree, to a repetition of the result. There is my proposal, expressed in a few hasty words. You shall now see what reasons I have to justify me in making it."

He turned to one of the books at his side, and opened it at a place marked by a small slip of paper.

"Don't suppose that I am going to weary you with a lecture on physiology," he said. "I think myself bound to prove, in justice to both of us, that I am not asking you to try this experiment in deference to any theory of my own devising. Admitted principles, and recognised authorities, justify me in the view that I take. Give me five minutes of your attention; and I will undertake to show you that Science sanctions my proposal, fanciful as it may seem. Here, in the first place, is the physiological principle on which I am acting, stated by no less a person than Dr. Carpenter. Read it for yourself."

He handed me the slip of paper which had marked the place in the book. It contained a few lines of writing, as follows:—

"There seems much ground for the belief, that *every* sensory impression which has once been recognised by the perceptive consciousness, is registered (so to speak) in the brain, and may be reproduced at some subsequent time, although there may be no consciousness of its existence in the mind during the whole intermediate period."

"Is that plain, so far?" asked Ezra Jennings.

"Perfectly plain."

He pushed the open book across the table to me, and pointed to a passage, marked by pencil lines.

"Now," he said, "read that account of a case, which has—as I believe—a direct bearing on your own position, and on the experiment which I am tempting you to try. Observe, Mr. Blake, before you begin, that I am now referring you to one of the greatest of English physiologists. The book in your hand is Doctor Elliotson's Human Physiology; and the case which the doctor cites, rests on the well-known authority of Mr. Combe."

The passage pointed out to me, was expressed in these terms:—

"Doctor Abel informed me," says Mr. Combe, "of an Irish porter to a warehouse, who forgot, when sober, what he had done when drunk; but, being drunk, again recollected the transactions of his former state of intoxication. On one occasion, being drunk, he had lost a parcel of some value, and in his sober moments could give no account of it. Next time he was intoxicated, he recollected that he had left the parcel at a certain house, and there being no address on it, it had remained there safely, and was got on his calling for it."

"Plain again?" asked Ezra Jennings.

"As plain as need be."

He put back the slip of paper in its place, and closed the book.

"Are you satisfied that I have not spoken without good authority to support me?" he asked. "If not, I have only to go to those bookshelves, and you have only to read the passages which I can point out to you."

"I am quite satisfied," I said, "without reading a word more."

"In that case, we may return to your own personal interest in this matter. I am bound to tell you that there is something to be said against the experiment as well as for it. If we could, this year, exactly reproduce, in your case, the conditions as they existed last year, it is physiologically certain that we should arrive at exactly the same result. But this—there is no denying it—is simply impossible. We can only hope to approximate to the conditions; and if we don't succeed in getting you nearly enough back to what you were, this venture of our's will fail. If we do succeed—and I am myself hopeful of success—you may at least so far repeat your proceedings on the birthday night, as to satisfy any reasonable person that you are guiltless, morally speaking, of the theft of the Diamond. I believe, Mr. Blake, I have now stated the question, on both sides of it, as fairly as I can, within the limits that I have imposed on myself. If there is anything that I have not made clear to you, tell me what it is—and if I can enlighten you, I will."

"All that you have explained to me," I said, "I understand perfectly. But I own I am puzzled on one point, which you have not made clear to me yet."

"What is the point?"

"I don't understand the effect of the laudanum on me. I don't understand my walking down-stairs, and along corridors, and my opening and shutting the drawers of a cabinet, and my going back again to my own room. All these are active proceedings. I thought the influence of opium was first to stupefy you, and then to send you to sleep."

"The common error about opium, Mr. Blake! I am, at this moment, exerting my intelligence (such as it is) in your service, under the influence of a dose of laudanum, some ten times larger than the dose Mr. Candy administered to you. But don't trust to my authority—even on a question which comes within my own personal experience. I anticipated the objection you have just made; and I have again provided myself with independent testimony, which will carry its due weight with it in your own mind, and in the minds of your friends."

He handed me the second of the two books which he had by him on the table.

"There," he said, "are the far-famed 'Confessions of an English Opium Eater'! Take the book away with you, and read it. At the passage which I have marked, you will find that when De Quincey had committed what he calls 'a debauch of opium,' he either went to the gallery at the Opera to enjoy the music, or he wandered about the London markets on Saturday night, and interested himself in observing all the little shifts and bargainings of the poor in providing their Sunday dinners. So much for the capacity of a man to occupy himself actively, and to move about from place to place under the influence of opium."

"I am answered so far," I said; "but I am not answered yet as to the effect produced by the opium on myself."

"I will try to answer you in few words," said Ezra Jennings. "The action of opium is comprised, in the majority of cases, in two influences—a stimulating influence first, and a sedative influence afterwards. Under the stimulating influence, the latest and most vivid impressions left on your mind—namely, the impressions relating to the Diamond—would be likely, in your morbidly sensitive nervous condition, to become intensified in your brain, and would subordinate to themselves your judgment and your will—exactly as an ordinary dream subordinates to itself your judgment and your will. Little by little, under this action, any apprehensions about the safety of the Diamond which you might have felt during the day, would be liable to develope themselves from the state of doubt to the state of certainty—would impel you into practical action to preserve the jewel—would direct your steps, with that motive in view, into the room which you entered—and would guide your hand to the drawers of the cabinet, until you had found the drawer which held the stone. In the spiritualised intoxication of opium, you would do all that. Later, as the sedative action began to gain on the stimulant action, you would slowly become inert and stupefied. Later still, you would fall into a deep sleep. When the morning came, and the effect of the opium had been all slept off, you would wake as absolutely ignorant of what you had done in the night as if you had been living at the Antipodes.—Have I made it tolerably clear to you, so far?"

"You have made it so clear," I said, "that I want you to go farther. You have shown me how I entered the room, and how I came to take the Diamond. But Miss Verinder saw me leave the room again, with the jewel in my hand. Can you trace my proceedings from that moment? Can you guess what I did next?"

"That is the very point I was coming to," he rejoined. "It is a question with me whether the experiment which I propose as a means of vindicating your innocence, may not also be made a means of recovering the lost Diamond as well. When you left Miss Verinder's sitting-room, with the jewel in your hand, you went back in all probability to your own room——"

"Yes? and what then?"

"It is possible, Mr. Blake—I dare not say more—that your idea of preserving the Diamond led, by a natural sequence, to the idea of hiding the Diamond, and that the place in which you hid it was somewhere in your bedroom. In that event, the case of the Irish porter may be your case. You may remember, under the influence of the second dose of opium, the place in which you hid the Diamond under the influence of the first."

It was my turn, now, to enlighten Ezra Jennings. I stopped him, before he could say any more.

"You are speculating," I said, "on a result which cannot possibly take place. The Diamond is, at this moment, in London."

He started, and looked at me in great surprise.

"In London?" he repeated. "How did it get to London from Lady Verinder's house?"

"Nobody knows."

"You removed it with your own hand from Miss Verinder's room. How was it taken out of your keeping?"

"I have no idea how it was taken out of my keeping."

"Did you see it, when you woke in the morning?"

"No."

"Has Miss Verinder recovered possession of it?"

"No."

"Mr. Blake! there seems to be something here which wants clearing up. May I ask how you know that the Diamond is, at this moment, in London?"

I had put precisely the same question to Mr. Bruff, when I made my first inquiries about the Moonstone, on my return to England.

In answering Ezra Jennings, I accordingly repeated what I had myself heard from the lawyer's own lips—and what is already familiar to the readers of these pages.

He showed plainly that he was not satisfied with my reply.

"With all deference to you," he said, "and with all deference to your legal adviser, I maintain the opinion which I expressed just now. It rests, I am well aware, on a mere assumption. Pardon me for reminding you, that your opinion also rests on a mere assumption as well."

The view he took of the matter was entirely new to me. I waited anxiously to hear how he would defend it.

"*I* assume," pursued Ezra Jennings, "that the influence of the opium — after impelling you to possess yourself of the Diamond, with the purpose of securing its safety—might also impel you, acting under the same influence and the same motive, to hide it somewhere in your own room. *You* assume that the Hindoo conspirators could by no possibility commit a mistake. The Indians went to Mr. Luker's house after the Diamond—and, therefore, in Mr. Luker's possession the Diamond must be! Have you any evidence to prove that the Moonstone was taken to London at all? You can't even guess how, or by whom, it was removed from Lady Verinder's house! Have you any evidence that the jewel was pledged to Mr. Luker? He declares that he never heard of the Moonstone; and his banker's receipt acknowledges nothing but the deposit of a valuable of great price. The Indians assume that Mr. Luker is lying—and you assume again that the Indians are right. All I say, in defence of my view is—that it is possible. What more, Mr. Blake, either logically or legally, can be said for yours?"

It was put strongly; but there was no denying that it was put truly as well.

"I confess you stagger me," I replied. "Do you object to my writing to Mr. Bruff, and telling him what you have said?"

"On the contrary, I shall be glad if you will write to Mr. Bruff. If we consult his experience, we may see the matter under a new light. For the present, let us return to our experiment with the opium. We have decided that you leave off the habit of smoking, from this moment?"

"From this moment."

"That is the first step. The next step is to reproduce, as nearly as we can, the domestic circumstances which surrounded you last year."

How was this to be done? Lady Verinder was dead. Rachel and I, so long as the suspicion of theft rested on me, were parted irrevocably. Godfrey Ablewhite was away, travelling on the Continent. It was simply impossible to reassemble the people who had inhabited the house, when I had slept in it last. The statement of this objection did not appear to embarrass Ezra Jennings. He attached very little importance, he said, to reassembling the same people—seeing that it would be vain to expect them to resume the various positions which they had occupied towards me in the past time. On the other hand, he considered it essential to the success of the experiment, that I should see the same objects about me which had surrounded me when I was last in the house.

"Above all things," he said, "you must sleep in the room which you slept in, on the birthday night, and it must be furnished in the same way. The stairs, the corridors, and Miss Verinder's sitting-room, must also be restored to what they were when you saw them last. It is absolutely necessary, Mr. Blake, to replace every article of furniture in that part of the house which may now be put away. The sacrifice of your cigars will be useless, unless we can get Miss Verinder's permission to do that."

"Who is to apply to her for permission?" I asked.

"Is it not possible for *you* to apply?"

"Quite out of the question. After what has passed between us, on the subject of the lost Diamond, I can neither see her, nor write to her, as things are now."

Ezra Jennings paused, and considered for a moment.

"May I ask you a delicate question?" he said.

I signed to him to go on.

"Am I right, Mr. Blake, in fancying (from one or two things which have dropped from you) that you felt no common interest in Miss Verinder, in former times?"

"Quite right."

"Was the feeling returned?'

"It was."

"Do you think Miss Verinder would be likely to feel a strong interest in the attempt to prove your innocence?"

"I am certain of it."

"In that case, *I* will write to Miss Verinder—if you will give me leave."

"Telling her of the proposal that you have made to me?"

"Telling her of everything that has passed between us to-day."

It is needless to say that I eagerly accepted the service which he had offered to me.

"I shall have time to write by to-day's post," he said, looking at his watch. "Don't forget to lock up your cigars, when you get back to the hotel! I will call to-morrow morning and hear how you have passed the night."

I rose to take leave of him; and attempted to express the grateful sense of his kindness which I really felt.

He pressed my hand gently. "Remember what I told you on the moor," he answered. "If I can do you this little service, Mr. Blake, I shall feel it like a last gleam of sunshine, falling on the evening of a long and clouded day."

We parted. It was then the fifteenth of June. The events of the next ten days—every one of them more or less directly connected with the experiment of which I was the passive

object—are all placed on record, exactly as they happened, in the Journal habitually kept by Mr. Candy's assistant. In the pages of Ezra Jennings, nothing is concealed, and nothing is forgotten. Let Ezra Jennings tell how the venture with the opium was tried, and how it ended.

QUEER-STREET.

The author of Ravenshoe informs his readers that "the good people in this world outnumber the bad ten to one," and backs his assertion with a species of *tip* worded thus: "The ticket for this belief is 'optimist.'" Ah! it is not easy to be a dweller in Queer-street and believe this! That is to say, if by "good" we mean unselfish, and by "bad" selfish. I have been established in Queer-street for more months than I care to count, and I vow and declare that Queer-street is making a pessimist of me. "Who cares?" Precisely so. *Who* cares? Nobody, if *I* don't.

I occasionally entertain myself in Queer-street —having only myself to entertain—by singing the one line—only the one line; the neighbours don't object:

> "I'm very lonely now, Mary, for the poor make no new friends!"

Make no new friends? They must be wonderfully sanguine poor who try to make new friends. Putting new friends out of the question as absurdly unmakeable, can they keep the ready-made *old?* An ironical Echo from the dark arches of Queer-street answers, "*Can* they!"

I remember the days when I would not have scrupled to rehearse as my own, Mr. Henry Kingsley's articles of belief. Those were the days of house and home; of lands and goods and kindred; of health and wealth and superb laziness; those were the days of balances—heavy balances; those were the days of accounts hard to be overdrawn. I was an optimist in those days. But in these? Hit me hard: I have no friends. Pish! why exert yourselves to hit me? I shall fall—I have fallen—without a blow. I have no balance. Friends and balance are synonymous terms, ladies and gentlemen!

Stale, and flat, and common-place, all this? Yes, stale, and flat, and common-place as Queer-street. Stale, and flat, and common-place, and irksome, as the memory of days when Queer-street was a pleasant myth, easy of study in serial literature. Stale as the daily want of daily bread; flat as the water drunk undiluted in Queer-street; common-place as the scanty coat and pantaloons, the questionable boots, the hat which cost threepence less than four-and-ninepence; irksome as the incessant effort to do your duty in, and not to scandalise by your personal appearance, the establishment where you *don't* earn—how should you?—but where you have doled out to you, every Saturday, at two o'clock P.M., enough to satisfy your Queer-street landlady.

Your Queer-street landlady! What do *I* care for *your* landlady? I notice that I have strayed from "me" to "you," from "mine" to "yours." Let me get back to *me* and to *mine*. How selfish we are in Queer-street, eh? We are: and, unless my memory went with the rest of my "belongings," we were slightly egotistical *out* of Queer-street.

A man I know very well, and who knows *me* not at all, said to me the other day—eyeing me the while, distastefully, "But, hang it, I can't make you out. You have *no* friends!" I neglected to inquire what he meant by "it." Unless his looks belied him he meant *me*. But the disquisition is irrelevant.

I might have replied to that man as the Dodger replied to Fagin in Oliver Twist: "I never heard you tell so much truth *at a time*, before." Not, you understand, that the man is in the habit of stating that which is not; but that his assertions made a profound impression on me. They were so exceptionally, and ludicrously true. No; he can't make me out. And supposing he cared to make me out (which he does not) I couldn't assist him: for I can't make myself out. And I have *no* friends. Of all the numbers on all the doors of all the houses in this London of ours, there is not one at which I could halt, saying to myself, "I'll turn in here and smoke a pipe with Tom, Jack, or Richard, till the shower's over." I get up in Queer-street of a morning and make preparations for my daily tramp in all weathers, from the neighbourhood of Hampstead to the neighbourhood of Westminster, and I get up with the certain knowledge that throughout that day, throughout that week, throughout an indefinite period of time, I shall not see a face or hear a voice that I care to see or hear, or whose owner cares to see or hear me. Shall I be denied the right to inform Mary, with all the melody left in my composition, that "I'm very lonely now"?

Nevertheless, don't misunderstand me. I am not whining. Not in my palmiest days did I feel less inclined to quote Richard after his bad dream, and to say:

> I shall despair; there is no creature loves me;
> And if I die no soul will pity me.

If I did commit myself to the couplet, I should at least feel bound, in honour, to add with Richard:

> Nay, wherefore should they? Since that I myself
> Find in myself no pity for myself!

—And I don't, because I find something too ludicrous—grimly, but still piquantly ludicrous—in my anomalous position, to permit of any self-commiseration. Moreover, a conviction that no creature loves you, and that if you die no soul will pity you, is an excellent reason, I think (speaking religiously), for hoping and living: an execrable reason, I think (still speaking religiously), for despairing and dying.

"Harry the Sixth bids thee despair and die!" very likely. But *wilt* thou despair and die, to oblige Harry the Sixth? More especially if

Harry happen to be the meanest cur that physical fear of physical consequences ever kept and guarded, safe and whole-skinned, within the pale of the law? I have called my position anomalous; and without being confidential over-much, I may assert that the term applies. My position *is* anomalous, and I am an anomaly. The recollection how blindly, how absurdly, how childishly, passive and ignorant I was, throughout the whole deuce-begotten process which landed me in Queer-street, ought, I know, by all the rules of convention, to cause me to gnash

> My teeth in darkness till returning morn,
> Then curse myself till sunset.

But it doesn't. Quite the contrary, it causes me to laugh: not "genially," or healthily, perhaps, but still to laugh. Many matters make me laugh, nowadays. Queer-street has taught me to laugh. If the brave days of old had lasted my time, I should have gone to my place, unaware with what a powerful sense of the ludicrous I had been by Nature gifted.

Nonsense? Small matters amuse small minds? Very well. *Have* it so. Small matters amuse my small mind mightily, especially in these holiday-tides. "Were you at the Derby?" "What are you going to do, Monday and Tuesday?" "Where do you dine to-day?" I never saw the humour of these small enquiries, until I came to Queer-street! There is a man whose open door I daily pass when I turn out into the streets at what we call in our office, and very facetiously call as far as *I* am concerned, "The luncheon hour," and this man, as I pass his door, invariably and heartily salutes me with:

> "May good digestion wait on appetite!"

Ho! ho! He thinks I am going to lunch! What an overpowering joke—in Queer-street!

LEAVES FROM THE MAHOGANY TREE.

DINING WITH AN ANCIENT ROMAN.

If any people ever knew how to cook, and by cooking to elevate the necessity of eating into the refined luxury of dining, it was the Romans under the early emperors. They had then acquired all the poetical and culinary art of Greece, and united it to the more solid learning of Rome.

Those Romans were good livers, huge eaters, and great spendthrifts. Vitellius never squandered less than ten thousand crowns at a meal, and at one celebrated dinner had on table two thousand fishes and seven thousand fat birds. As for that monster of extravagance, Heliogabalus, (Gobbleus it ought to be), at one special party he gave each guest the gold cup from which he had drunk, and sent each person home in a carriage presented to him for the purpose. Albanus, a Gaulish consul, is said to have devoured at one supper, one hundred peaches, ten melons, fifty large green figs, and three hundred oysters. There is a rumour too that the tyrant Maximus used to eat forty pounds of meat per day.

The Romans had their jentaculum, or breakfast, soon after they rose; and this early snack consisted of bread, raisins, olives, eggs, and cheese. Their beverage at this meal was milk, or mulsum (honied wine). The prandium was a sort of lunch about noon; but the real solid repast was the cœna, our dinner, at the ninth hour, about half past two in summer. It matters little whether we call it an early supper or a late dinner, since our own seven o'clock meal is open to the same doubts.

We all know the ordinary Roman house, thanks to the pretty revival at Sydenham. From the centre hall, with its little garden and cool murmuring fountain, opened the dim bins which served for sleeping-rooms, each with its curtained doorway. The black walls of the rooms, opening from the hall, and all on one floor, were painted with little groups of sea nymphs, and cupids, and triumphs of Bacchus. The floors were mosaic. In everything the Italian climate was taken into consideration, and there were no stuffy carpets or dusty mattings to retain the dirt and heat.

We will suppose the ninth hour near at hand, and the slaves busy in the kitchen preparing to dish up dinner. The busts of the ancestors in the hall have been dusted and rubbed, and the couches are ready ranged in the triclinium (or dining-room). The gold and silver cups are ranged on the buffets, and all is ready for the feast, even down to the garlands of roses which are to be given to the guests at the close of the banquet.

The couches were so arranged that they formed three sides of a square, and in the midst stood the cedar and ivory, or tortoiseshell and bronze, tables, on which each course was placed, arranged in trays. The guests lay down on the couches in an uncomfortable Oriental way, three to a couch: each guest, propped up with cushions, leaning on his left arm, the right being free to receive food and to hold his plate. Silk cushions marked the place of each guest. The host pointed out the special seats to favoured guests, much as your host does now.

As soon as the guests had taken their places, slaves came and removed their sandals, and boys with their loins girded up offered water in bowls: in which it was the custom for all to dip their hands. At a nod of the host, the first course would appear—generally shell-fish, eggs, and vegetables—and with it a bill of fare to guide the appetite of each diner. Every rich man had his own slave at his back, to hand the dishes or to pass the wine.

We can, by help of a learned German professor (a distinguished friend of Dreikopf's), and Petronius, pretty correctly follow a preliminary "gustatorium," which more resembled the conclusion than the beginning of an English dinner. Let us place in the centre of the first tray, which was inlaid with tortoiseshell, a bronze ass, in whose silver panniers were piled black and green olives. On the back of this ass rode a portly bronze Silenus, from whose hands ran down a

sauce of oysters and fish-livers upon a sow's breast that floated in the dish below. There were also sausages on silver gridirons: the hot coals beneath, simulated by crimson pomegranate pips and Syrian plums; and there was lacertus (a common fish) served up with chopped eggs, mint, and rue. Snails and oysters were also handed round, garnished with asparagus, lettuces, and radish. The guests were all this time constantly supplied with goblets of white wine and honey (a sort of Athol brose). In fact, this opening of the Roman banquet did not differ very much from the opening of a modern Russian dinner, which commences with sardines, anchovies, and a small glass of brandy or liqueur.

The second course would probably be a surprise—one of those elaborate practical jokes in which the Roman epicure delighted—perhaps a whole pig stuffed with fat thrushes, the yolks of eggs and mincemeat. But we will follow Petronius at his banquet. A wooden hen with outspread wings, exquisitely carved, was there brought in in a basket full of chaff, brooding on eggs: which the slaves drew out and handed to the guests. These eggs were found, to everybody's delight, to be of baked crust, each one enclosing a highly-seasoned beccafico. The signal to remove this gustatorium (or course) was given by musicians placed at one end of the atrium. An ingenious surprise of this kind was once tried on Nicomedes, King of Bithynia. The monarch was passionately fond of fresh herrings; and, being far from the sea-coast, in a wild region where a wagonfull of gold would not have purchased a fresh fish, the king's ingenious cook contrived to enclose meat in frames of the shape of the fish, and to season it so as to exactly resemble herring. At Petronius's supper, too, the cook served up geese and wild fowl, moulded out of pork. But all these surprises, so artfully designed to reawaken the blunted appetite, were poor, compared with the clever thought of the French cook who took some live crawfish and painted their shells with some sharp acid that turned them a brilliant scarlet. He then covered these pressed men under a pile of patient dead recruits in the same uniform, and, clapping a tight cover over them all, hurried the dish on to the royal table, where the astonishment and horror of the ladies at the coming to life of the supposed dead creatures caused infinite amusement, and small talk.

On the removal of the second ingenious course, we may suppose black slaves wiping the tables and handing water again to the guests, whose hands would by this time require ablution. Boys wearing green garlands would then enter, carrying between them on sticks those large oval amphoræ that could not stand alone, but were kept embedded in earth or sand. On the labels round the gypsumed necks, were written the names of the consuls in whose period of office the wine had been bottled.

The Romans had a detestable plan of putting sea-water into wine, and also of doctoring it with aloes, myrrh, aromatic bitters, and costly essential oils. They drank hot spiced wine in winter, and they had bronze urns (of a tureen shape with a tap), in which it was sometimes served. It was not uncommon to serve the wine in a sort of huge punch-bowl, out of which it was ladled into the cups of the guests, either neat, or mixed with "allaying Tiber."

The Greek and Roman wine-merchants (as remarkable for honesty as their English descendants) had the following traditions about wine. There were two kinds of Falernian, the dry and the sweet; neither of which improved after twenty years probation in the cask. The Alban wine was ripe at fifteen years, the Surrentine at five-and-twenty. The Trifoline was an early wine; the Tibur, ripe after ten years imprisonment. The Gauran was a scarce and fine wine, strong and oily. The Cæcuban was a grand wine, but heady. The Signine wine was ripe at six years; the Nomentan at five. The Erbulian wine, at first dark, afterwards turned white, and was a light and delicate wine. Marseilles wine was fine, but thick and full bodied. The Tarentine were light sweet wines. Corinthian and Eubæan wines were harsh and bad. Snow was in the summer mixed with the wine to cool it, and to the consequent dilution the Romans seem to have been indifferent.

In the next course let us suppose that strange dish, the very refinement of luxury, which was served to Ulpian: "The Dish of Roses," which feasted the eyes, nose, and stomach, and at the same time appealed strongly to the imagination. It was thus made, and we confide it as a secret to the French cooks of the United Kingdom:

Take a wheel-barrow full of rose leaves, and pound in a mortar; add to them the brains of two pigs, and a dozen thrushes, boiled and mixed with chopped yolk of egg, oil, vinegar, pepper and wine; mix and pour these ingredients together, then stew them slowly and steadily, until the perfect perfume is developed—we say stew, but it may be boil, for the obscure Greek writer from whence we quote, disdained to enter into minute practical details.

In the third course let us suppose another surprise. A tray is brought in, covered with natural turf on which are spread pieces of honeycomb, and heaps of parched chick peas. When the guests have been startled and horrified enough at this, the slaves lift off a tray and disclose a rich and lavish dinner in full bloom beneath. In the midst of the tray we can place the stew of roses, or a fat hare fitted with artificial wings and called a Pegasus, by the master cook. We surround this, with dishes of pigeons, fowls, ducks, mullets, turbots, and flounders. The guests applaud the display as the carver advances trippingly and carves in strict accordance with time and rhythm.

The next of the twenty courses not unfrequent at the table of a Roman epicure, would perhaps be a boar roasted whole (the Umbrian

boars were preferred for their special flavour) with palm twig baskets full of Syrian or Egyptian dates hung from its tusks. Around this savoury monster were sometimes placed litters of sucking pigs moulded in sweet paste. These were distributed as presents among the company. The scissor or carver sometimes came in dressed as a hunter, to operate on the wild boar, if it were served as the pièce de resistance.

After this, as a surprise in the nature of a pleasant practical joke, would be borne in, say a pig stuffed with live thrushes that flew out when the cook opened their prison with his knife.

Men like Apicius, of insane appetites, would construct new dishes of singing birds, or of the brains of ostriches and nightingales; but these were exceptional cases, to be matched only by the crazy prodigality of tyrannical voluptuaries like Heliogabalus, who would strew his floors with gold dust—ordinary people strewing their mosaic pavements merely with saffron, and coloured and perfumed sawdust.

It was not uncommon at the close of a Roman dinner, for the ceiling to open and presents to descend, fastened to a silver hoop. In this way silver and alabaster bottles of ointment, and silver garlands, were often given to the guests. When the dessert appeared, mastick toothpicks were handed round by the slaves. In the dessert tray a statue often occupied the centre, a Flora or Vertumnus, laden with fruits, sometimes artificial and full of saffron-coloured juices, that spirted forth on those who first pressed them. Among the sweetmeats made by the Romans, were fish and birds moulded in pastry and filled with almonds and raisins; they were also fond of melons cut into shapes, and of quinces stuck with almonds.

When rich people gave an entertainment and wished to make up by displays of wealth for witty and amusing conversation, it was usual to have rope dancers and posture makers to exhibit between the courses: while more refined people would send for flute players or would have Spanish dancing girls from Cadiz to perform their semi-Oriental dances.

If the host wished to turn the Cœna into a revel, the party would then take baths or saunter along the colonnades, while a new room was fitted up for them. Roman furniture was more portable than ours, and the change would give the numerous slaves of a rich man but very little trouble. We must imagine the new room panelled with marble, the ceiling inlaid with gold and ivory; the chairs, tables, and couches, in the pure Greek taste, simple, and severely beautiful in shape. The lamps would be like the Pompeian lamps, hung by bronze and silver chains from the ceiling, or suspended from the cross boughs of bronze pillars. Greek taste had shaped every cup and moulded even the simplest ornaments of the table. The goblets of all shapes were ranged on silver or marble sideboards. The slaves prepared the vessels full of snow, and the urns for the mulled wine. The chairman or king of the feast was then chosen by throw of dice, after the rose and ivy wreaths and perfumes and ointments had been distributed. He who threw Venus, or the six, became king. The lowest cast was called the dog. It was usual, as each one threw, for him to invoke the name of the woman he loved. The leader of the feast decided what quantity of water should be mixed with the wine, as only avowed drunkards took pure wine. This chairman also fixed what number of cyathi, or ladlesful, each person should have poured into his glass at a time. When a guest proposed a toast, he mentioned the name of his love and his companions, and himself then drank as many ladlesful of negus as there were letters in the lady's name.

But after all, it must be allowed that there is some justice in Smollett's extraordinarily humorous caricature (so much in the style of Gilray) of a dinner after the manner of the ancients. The Romans were in some respects barbaric in their tastes. They craved for unnatural things rather than real dainties. We certainly should prefer salmon à la Béchamel to thunny seasoned with (ugh!) asafœtida and cheese. They perfumed their wines, which must have destroyed all refinement of bouquet; they mingled their courses in a savage manner, and without respect to the convenances or to common sense; they were fond of vulgar tricks and theatrical surprises, which must have irritated the temper and vexed the digestion; they neglected soups. They were ignorant of liqueurs, and did not know the glory of a chasse, or the propriety of a "gloria." They fretted that poor weak vessel the stomach with rasping music and pompous trumpetings, and interrupted the serious attention requisite for the pure enjoyment of an exquisite dish, by the unwise introduction of ballet girls and acrobats. And above all—and here we hold them guilty of the highest treason—they, as a rule, excluded ladies from their banquets. No wonder that leering Debauchery, crimson-faced Drunkenness, and other of Circe's chosen servants, forced their way in at the barred Roman door, and that where the chaste Venus was forbidden, Cotytto and her train were welcomed.

THE BARRACK-ROOM COMPANY.

Permit a veritable soldier to look round the barrack-room in which he sits, and to describe its other occupants with fidelity.

Old Soldier is a brave man who has won the Victoria cross, the Crimean, Turkish, Indian, and China medals; yet the medal for "long service and good conduct" he will never win. He has one fault—running through the pages of the defaulters' book and the courts-martial records—habitual drunkenness. He is a good soldier in all else; and after years of toil and trouble he is still tough and hard as the stock of his own rifle, methodically punctilious as to his bed and accoutrements, mindful of the amenities of the barrack-room. He has a store of anecdote, and tells with unassuming force

his perilous adventures. Who can help wishing that this poor warrior may not be doomed to eightpence a day for life? But he has had no schooling, and cannot write out even an absent report, far less calculate the mysterious hieroglyphics of a ration return. Ignorant and drunken, what can be hoped for him?

Recruit, who seeks to understand the mysterious process of "heelballing" a pouch, stands watching that operation with a wistfulness which is delightful to behold. The seasoned hero of five medals proceeds composedly to sharpen the edge of this young man's curiosity. Recruit indicates dubiously that he has got "tup-pence 'a-penny," and rattles the same in his trousers pocket. Old Soldier discovers the fact that *he* has just "three-'a-pence" in an old jacket on the shelf. A solemn compact is made between these worthies that they shall crack a pot; the pot is cracked accordingly at the bar of the canteen, in alternate swigs—Old Soldier taking all the odd ones down to the last, which he disposes of with reluctance and subdued gratification. Recruit returns under the wing of his Mentor, who has the deliberate cogitative stride of the old toper. Recruit has been a "navvy" who, when top-heavy takes up an unconscionable quantity of road in the nautical way of tacking, but on the minor half of a pot he can do no more than lurch fitfully. Recruit essays pouch-balling as an experiment; but fails to penetrate the mystery. Old Soldier explains. I have seen men let off the steam of their wrath through a severe course of pouch-balling, or pipe-claying, silent and absorbed, as if their existence were at stake. The process has a powerful sedative effect on the system, and is a valuable remedy for mental depression if an old strong-flavoured black pipe be taken along with it. Heelball is made in this wise: I reveal a secret, once strictly guarded, because vigorous martinets have resolved to put down Heelball even at the expense of smartness, and have ruthlessly ordained the use of common blacking.

Heelball is made in this wise. Experienced old soldier watches carefully for a knuckle-bone, and, after reducing it to a fine white ash in the fire, mixes it with melted beeswax and ground indigo, into a stiff paste, which is then kneaded into little lumps and sold to recruits as precious. Old Soldier now present is one of the last of the race of heelballers.

Butts sleeps in the next cot to Heelball, and years ago, when he joined the depôt, modelled himself upon that warrior. That was before the Crimean War, he has since been in China, and is now a convalescent invalid, who was transformed into an officer's servant because he has some glimmering sense of polite existence, picked up in former days, when he was groom to a country squire in his native village. Butts dresses tastefully, at his master's expense, in dark tweed, and has a faint odour of civilian about him, corrected by a distant air of barrack-room brassball and pipeclay.

When Letter Bugle sounds, Butts anticipates the orderly corporal, whose duty it is to receive the letters of the company from the post-sergeant, and struts by Barrack-Room, flaunting in the eyes of inquisitive comrades, ominous official despatches On Her Majesty's Service, addressed to the Captain Commanding the Eleventh Depôt; or less official pink billets in Italian spider hands to Captain Swordknot, at the barracks. At such times, speculation confines itself chiefly to the well-filled War-Office or Horse-Guards letters; Old Soldier having an acute feeling of route to somewhere (it doesn't matter to him *where*) and revolving in his mind vaguely, the possibility of being warned for the baggage guard—a glorious mode of military progression, involving frequent halts at half-way houses to liquor up the exhausted party, who take turn also, when clear of a town, to ride at ease on the waggon. Having exhibited the outsides of the letters, Butts proceeds to deliver them to his master, and make out a précis of their purport from that gentleman's physiognomy. Butts served at the officers' mess three times a week in all the glory of plush and silk stockings. His master, Captain Swordknot, presides over the lesser failings of his depôt, and as a rule refers all victims of the effects of canteen fourpenny, to the dread tribunal of the Colonel, a great chief who wields the sword of justice like a Chinese executioner. Butts was lately caught overladen with fourpenny, and Swordknot remorselessly sent him up to the high seat of judgment. There, he was sentenced to ten days' pack drill and fourteen days' confinement to barracks, besides lapsing into a state of ignominous heelball and pipeclay. Butts having been thus stripped of his plumage, Old Soldier and he have become chums, and deliver law to the recruits on all points of barrack-room economy.

Cropper is our sergeant. He is an old stamp of sergeant; one who fought in the Sutlej campaign, and in every other campaign of later date; yet he is straight and smart to-day, more clean, prim, and methodical, than any other man in the regiment, be he young or old. Cropper will never be a colour sergeant or troop sergeant major, as the cavalry term a relative rank, because he has a horror of accounts, and of the handling of other men's money. He prefers to die in harness, if need be, as a good old duty sergeant to the last. He has never married, and is after his fashion a spruce exact bachelor, careful in all things, and especially particular as to his outward appearance. Yet this poor barrack bachelor has a warm heart under his crust of discipline. I thoroughly respect our sergeant, and delight to watch the play of his stern features in a time of conflicting duties. He has a broad high forehead, which would indicate a capacity for something better than his calling, if it were not for his defective early education. He has sharply defined eyebrows, and a thin well-formed aquiline nose denoting great sagacity; but his sagacity has all been exercised on trifles of routine. He has a hard thin-

lipped mouth, and a square, determined—but not massive, chin, and bushy whiskers. He performs even his most trivial duties, as if they were divine laws. He was moulded in the stern old school. He dresses himself more carefully than ever on Sunday, and with natty walking cane in hand, sallies forth on that afternoon, when not engrossed by duty, to slaughter rambling cooks and housemaids by the score. He walks in a fine drill-book style, based on the balance step gaining ground, chest advanced boldly, shoulders well back, and epigastric imperceptible under the pressure of tight waist-belt. He wears neat-fitting shiny boots, and well creased trousers which he invariably calls "pajamas," with a small forage cap set on three hairs, as the wits have it, which he characterises as his "topee." He is the subject of much innocent tenderness from several serving maids and one washerwoman; but his own truest and best tenderness is that which binds him to a little drummer-boy, on whom he lavishes all the kindness at his call—notably in the way of brandy-balls and cakes. The little urchin was born on board ship, and afterwards lost his mother. The poor boy's father also died soon afterwards of cholera. This touched our sergeant's heart, and the child was adopted by a married woman of the regiment, who received the cost of his sustenance from our dear old bushy-whiskered disciplinarian. Time rolled on and the child went to the regimental school and so became a veritable drummer-boy.

The boy is full of boyish antics, but in the matter of "soldiering" is as neat and almost as methodical as his benefactor, the model upon which he has formed himself. This is a never failing source of pride to our outwardly grim Sergeant Cropper. The banter that goes on between the man and the boy is pleasant to hear, for it never exceeds the bounds of respectful playfulness on the one side, and of charming though staid complaisance on the other. The drummer boy is eager to go abroad to his regiment, and I fervently hope that if he do not tread exactly in the steps of his tutor, he may adopt many of his best and most worthy characteristics. By-and-by Cropper may be in the militia or the volunteers, or perhaps a tough old barrack sergeant with the sympathising washerwoman to keep house. May he see his boy come home a man with medals on his breast, to break bread with him again for the sake of the gentle old times!

Dobbs is our shoemaker, a very feeble consumptive little creature with a small wife and an excessively large family. He visits the Barrack Room only to answer to his name at the tattoo roll-call, or on special occasions, as kit-inspection or muster-parade. Dobbs is a very genial and—within certain limits, imposed conjugally, a decidedly wet soul. He is a gossip of the first water, and retails unheard of canards. He has a very professional appearance as I see him now, stirrup on foot passed over the sole of the ammunition boot on his knee ready for nailing, greasy leather apron, and sleeves tucked up to the elbow, revealing a pair of bony arms, painfully suggestive of chronic atrophy.

Ah! Our congress of worthies in this and other Barrack Rooms in these Barracks, is a motley one; we have old haggard men who have served in nearly every part of the globe, and have periodical twinges of liver complaint, heart disease, or consumption; we have young men with an ardent longing for foreign service, which is speedily and frequently gratified; we have men who are midway in their service, and are undecided whether to return to their former callings in civil life, or go on manfully to the distant goal of a life pension to sustain them when they are too helpless to work. We are a motley collection of poor fellows, not over well taught, and with but a poor little stake in life. Still we are a bit of life after all, and the world outside the Barrack Room might like us better if it knew us better.

AT A CLUB DINNER.

I. THE OLD FOGIES.

We three
Old fogies be;
The crow's foot crawls, the wrinkle comes,
Our heads grow bare
Of the bonnie brown hair,
Our teeth grow shaky in our gums.
Gone are the joys that once we knew,
Over the green, and under the blue,
Our blood runs calm, as calm can be,
And we're old fogies—fogies three.

Yet if we be
Old fogies three,
The life still pulses in our veins;
And if the heart
Be dulled in part,
There's sober wisdom in our brains.
We may have heard that Hope's a knave,
And Fame a breath beyond the grave.
But what of that—if wiser grown,
We make the passing day our own,
And find true joy where joy can be,
And live our lives, though fogies three?

Aye—though we be
Old fogies three,
We're not so dulled as not to dine;
And not so old
As to be cold
To wit, to beauty, and to wine.
Our hope is less, our memory more,
Our sunshine brilliant as of yore.
At four o'clock i' th' afternoon
'Tis warm as morning and as boon.
And every age bears blessings free,
Though we're old fogies—fogies three.

II. CLOS VOUGEOT.

When happy skylarks soar and sing,
To welcome back the tardy spring,
And daisies peep and roses blow,
Give, oh give me, Clos Vougeot.

When summers breathe the promise free
Of bounteous vines and grapes to be,
And autumns pay what summers owe,
Give, oh give us, Clos Vougeot.

When ice-bound streams in darkness creep,
And Nature dreams in wintry sleep,
And Norland tempests whirl the snow,
Give, oh give us, Clos Vougeot.

When friends are shy because I'm poor,
And hint they knew my ruin sure,
And half the world becomes my foe,
Give, oh give me, Clos Vougeot.

When wealth comes flooding to my hand,
And boon companions understand,
That round my board the wine cups flow,
Give, oh give us, Clos Vougeot.

When I am hale, and fresh, and strong,
And Time runs merry as my song,
To keep the fire at healthful glow,
Give, oh give me, Clos Vougeot.

When grief and care my senses clutch,
And Fancy flies at Sorrow's touch;
And life's machine runs dull and slow,
Give oh give me, Clos Vougeot!

III. THE JOLLY COMPANIONS.

Jolly companions! three times three!
Let us confess what fools we be!
We eat more dinner than hunger craves,
We drink our passage to early graves,
And fill, and swill, till our foreheads burst,
For sake of the wine, and not of the thirst.
Jolly companions! three times three,
Let us confess what fools we be!

We toil and moil from morn to night
Slaves and drudges in health's despite,
Gathering and scraping painful gold
To hoard and garner till we're old;
And die, mayhap, in middle prime,
Loveless, joyless, all our time.
Jolly companions! three times three,
Let us confess what fools we be!

Or else we leave our warm fireside,
Friends and comrades, bairns or bride,
To mingle in the world's affairs,
And vex our souls with public cares;
And have our motives misconstrued.
Reviled, maligned, misunderstood.
Jolly companions! three times three,
Let us confess what fools we be!

IV. THE AMIABLE CYNIC.

I've drunk good wine
From Rhone and Rhine,
And filled the glass
To friend or lass,
Mid jest and song,
The gay night long,
And found the bowl
Inspired the soul,
With neither wit, nor wisdom richer,
Than comes from water in the pitcher.

I've ridden far
In coach and car,
Sped four in hand
Across the land;
On gallant steed
Have measured speed,
With the summer wind
That lagged behind;
But found more joy for days together
In tramping o'er the mountain heather.

I've dined, long since,
With king and prince,
In solemn state,
Stiff and sedate;
And wished I might
Take sudden flight
And dine alone
Unseen, unknown,
On a mutton chop and hot potato,
Reading my Homer or my Plato.

It comes to this,
The truest bliss
For great or small
Is free to all;
Like the fresh air,
Like flowerets fair,
Like night or day,
Like work or play;
And books that charm or make us wiser—
Better to know than king or kaiser.

DOUBTS AND FEARS.

"My own dear, dear, little Maggie!"

I was Maggie. As to whether or not I was dear, it is not for me to say, but detraction itself acknowledged me little. Hence, with the usual contentment of gentle English maidens, I greatly desired to be tall. Tall and fair, with delicate features, and a well-cut nose. Such was my refined taste. Men, I conceived should, without exception, be dark; women, without exception, fair.

But I and my theories had got somehow into a sort of muddle.

Here was I, Maggie, short, dark, plump (I forgot to mention that, in my standard of beauty, women were etherially slight. I admire, indeed, the scraggiest specimens), with arms over which I had frequently sighed, they were so round and so plump, and meant to remain so. I derived no comfort from their dimpled appearance.

Then again, he who had called me his dear little Maggie, was fair. Decidedly fair, understand! No sort of compromise. Yellow hair, whiskers, moustache, all quite golden. No doubt he had some good points. Handsome sleepy blue eyes, brilliantly white teeth, and that sort of thing. But the one fact remained;—he was fair.

I had fretted and fumed at this at first, but it was so useless (for, with the best intentions to please me, my lover could not positively change his skin, and the hottest sun had no power to bronze him), that at last I left off thinking about it and fell back resignedly on his inner qualities. One of them was, at all events, a reverence for all things worthy to be reverenced.

We had had the most orthodox courtship. All adjectives on his part, all modest depreciation on mine. It had had only one drawback. It had left us where we began. We were neither of us any nearer to the old sweet end of courtship. Marriage was still but a lovely perspective. The fact is, that among the many mistakes the fairies made at my birth, they forgot to endow me with wealth. That and the fair

skin had both been omitted. My lover also was poor, existing at present on an officer's pay, but with fabulous riches shining in the future.

His mother was a very rich woman, and we had always supposed she meant to provide for her only child; but it had lately been rumoured that she would not do so, unless, said report, he married to please her.

And soon my lover showed me a letter, where the rumour turned to a threat.

To inherit her money, he must indeed marry to please her, and she appeared to have herself selected his wife.

"Oh, Bernard, how unfortunate!"

It did seem unfortunate. But I was so happy in the possession of a lover, and so proud of that lover being Bernard, that I don't at all think I realized the extent of the misfortune. Bernard, however, was filled with indignation against his mother.

"My own dear, dear little Maggie! Maggie, you do not doubt me? You are not in the least afraid—this letter I mean?"

"Why, Bernard, no."

"You do not think it could ever influence me," he went on excitedly; "that I would ever take a wife of my mother's choosing, that I would ever marry any one—*any one*—but you, Madge?"

As I have said before, I did not at all admire my arms, but that was no reason why they should not be made of use. They were of use now, for they crept round his neck, and Bernard became quiet.

We said so little in the course of the next few minutes that I am not going to repeat it. Besides, we had said it so often before. How happy we were in the month that succeeded! Bernard and I threw the threat to the winds. Such lovely long walks in the Staffordshire lanes, such reckless plucking of the Staffordshire roses!

Ah! how easily I conjure up the lanes and the fields. Cool and fresh, with the smell of grass in the air, and the drone of insects. The heat of the day passing in vapour, the flowercups filling with dew. A lark soaring upward, like a speck in the light. A golden rain of sunbeams falling warm from heaven to earth.

"At present, Madge," said Bernard, with his arm round my waist, "I am the happiest pauper that breathes on the earth."

This would be, perhaps, at the top of a gate: a quickset hedge just before us, a speculative cow looking over. I would reply, contentedly:

"Dear, we are very happy so."

This could not last for ever. I don't mean sitting on the gate, because that would have been very undesirable, but the peace, the quiet, the sense of being alone.

Even the gods had to come down from Olympus, and I found that my presence was requested on earth.

"Madge," said my father at breakfast one morning, throwing me a letter across the table, "read this. Maze Hill is quite full, and Florence has asked to come here."

He had a newspaper before him, which he pretended to be reading whilst really he waited for my answer.

"Oh, my dear papa!" I remonstrated.

"I know, I know, my dear," he said, hurriedly; "but it can't be helped. Just tell Flo' that you and Bernard are——in fact, that you like sometimes to be alone, and I am sure she will be too good-natured to worry you. You can give her a book, you know, or an antimacassar to do."

But I did not at all think she would work antimacassars, and I felt my brown skin flush up angrily.

"Write to her nicely, Madge," my father hinted, "and be sure that your letter is posted before five."

After which little speech, compliance on my part was expected.

Ah, Staffordshire! Staffordshire that till now I had so loved! I wished now, we were in any other county. For in Staffordshire there lived Miss Florence Burnand. So at least said Staffordshire; but Staffordshire was mistaken. Going to Paris at the height of the season, you sat at the Louvre next Miss Florence Burnand. If you leant on the rails of the drive in Hyde Park, the prettiest face was Miss Florence Burnand's. On the top of Mont Blanc, with a long crooked stick, there had once been seen Miss Florence Burnand. In fact, Florence was everywhere, and did everything. Still, in Staffordshire there did exist a certain Maze Hill, and at the top of Flo's epistles, posted, perhaps, from some place up the Nile, there always appeared an impossible monogram, with Maze Hill very fine and large in gilt letters underneath.

On the strength of which, Staffordshire put forth its claims to Florence; that young lady dancing the while in London ball-rooms, or admiring the sea from the chain pier at Brighton.

Said the fashionable paper:

"Suddenly she disappeared from the world of fashion. The capricious little lady grew tired of incense. She dropped the laurels that were offered her at her pretty feet, and took the train for Staffordshire."

"And I wish that the train had carried her past," I grumbled to Bernard, but Bernard for once did not heed me.

"Burnand," he said, "Burnand, Burnand! Now where have I heard that name?"

That evening I wrote to Florence, telling her how intensely stupid she would find us, and hoping she would not allow it to keep her away.

Florence wrote back. She should certainly come, and no place could seem stupid after London.

"Chacun à son goût," said Bernard, shrugging his shoulders. "If she finds *us* amusing, I shall think she has a fund of amusement within herself. Little lady, why don't you mend your gloves?" And so we slided away gracefully from Florence.

But all too soon, Miss Burnand arrived.

Now, I was myself not at all acquainted with my cousin. All that I knew of her, I knew from report.

"Too pretty for the place," I commented inwardly, and then I was very angry with myself, and begged Bernard's pardon in my heart, and could find no words strong enough to condemn my want of faith, and tried very hard to like my pretty cousin. In fact, she was a mere slip of a girl, very slight and light looking, with very undeniable eyes, and a very undeniable mouth. A little girl, with little delicate ears, slim feet, and long-fingered hands with pink palms.

That night I looked long and earnestly at myself in the glass. I believe it is not uncommon for young ladies so to do, and with me it had grown rather a habit. I was always so anxious to see if, haply, I appeared one shade fairer, and I know that I turned my whole hair inside out, that so I might get at the lightest tints. That night, however, I played no such freaks. I simply stood and examined.

I saw in the glass, a well-shaped girl, a brown face brilliantly coloured, a plump white neck, round plump arms decorated with dimples, little fat hands, also all over dimples, but grievously brown, and with fingers ungracefully short.

Now, looking back on what I saw, I highly approve of the image in the glass; but Maggie in those days was not satisfied.

"Brown!" I sighed discontentedly. "Brown is no word for it. Mahogany is nearer the colour."

Thus I, Maggie, into the small hours; then, tired at last, I crept into bed, and brought my brown face into contrast with the sheets.

Next morning on entering the breakfast-room, I found Florence already down before me, looking fresh, and sweet, as an English girl should, at something before eight in the morning.

My father was an artist, and had a true artist's reverence for beauty. He looked with admiration at her elegant little figure, at her classically shaped head with its glossy wavy hair simply and prettily confined. Bernard was not so artistic. I glanced at him over my tea-cup, but his handsome blue eyes were half asleep, and his face a blank wall for expression.

At length, as I watched him, I saw the man change; his sleepy blue eyes woke up, and some intelligence flashed in his face. Turning to Florence, and for the first time addressing her, he said:

"You have just come from London, Miss Burnand. Where have you lately been visiting?"

"Kensington," said Florence, "twenty-nine Anonymous Terrace. It's very pretty about there."

"It is so," he replied laconically; and turning from her, he chatted gaily to me all through breakfast.

I was filled with a horrible dread. Twenty-nine Anonymous Terrace! And Bernard's mother, I knew well, lived at twenty. Could it be possible that Florence was the lady she had selected for his wife. She had plenty of money, and she was aristocratic enough for any great dame.

Oh dear, how I wished that Bernard and I might but run down to the station after breakfast, and see her off politely by the train. Not so, however.

I see my father shut himself up in his studio; I watch Bernard saunter slowly down the garden, waiting as usual for me to join him; I wonder how on earth I shall get rid of Miss Burnand.

I think of papa's little hint—the antimacassars—but I feel intuitively that, though a crochet-needle may be very well in my little short fingers, Miss Burnand's pretty hands are not turned to such account. Then Bernard whistles, and I flush, and Florence looks around her—a well-bred girl much amazed. I feel hot and indignant. What ridiculous lovers she must think us!

I twitch my old hat from a peg, and half make as though I would put it on. To put it on entirely, I have not courage. Florence catches the idea conveyed by my hat.

"I am going to write letters," she says; "don't mind me."

I place pens and ink before her with the rapidity of an experienced clerk, and dance out into the sunshine down our gay little garden up to Bernard. A long happy morning; a lovers' long talk. We go out of the garden, and into the fields, and sit on a great yellow haystack. Bernard goes up first, and I climb up after. Bernard talks rubbish, and I talk rubbish after him.

He tells me where, when we are married, he means to take me. We are to touch, it would seem, at all the loveliest spots of the earth; we are just to touch, and pass on. I am very inexperienced, and I have never been out of Staffordshire. Still, I vaguely feel that this touching and passing on may be expensive.

"That will require money?" I say, modestly interrogative.

"Beyond a doubt, Madge."

Bernard's face clouds. I feel sure he is filial, and thinking of his mother. Some subtle association of ideas places Florence before me.

"What do you think of her, Bernard? You admire her, of course?"

"Of course I do," he said. "Who could help it?"

I was mortally ashamed, but little jealous thrills ran down my dreadfully plump arms, and I felt myself striving to slide out of his grasp.

Bernard would not hear of the arrangement. He took no notice of my discomposure, only held me all the faster, and talked as if I, Maggie, were at once the quaintest and sweetest little lady in the land. This was so far pleasant, that I partially recovered; but I could not quite lay aside a restless fear, a horrible dread, of—something.

Florence gave me no cause for uneasiness; and yet I was for ever watching her. She was certainly, down in Staffordshire, just as she had

been in London, Paris, and half a dozen other capitals, a complete success; her peculiar charm was the ease with which she allowed herself to be amused. It was all one to her, London or Staffordshire. She would frame her little aristocratic face in the window of a carriage, in the drive of Hyde Park, calmly returning the gaze of the multitude; she would ride in the "Row," her delicate profile set off by her fashionable hat; or here, in the country, she would gather up the skirts of all her pretty morning dresses, and race about the lanes like a child. So strangely adaptable!

To my father she talks pictures, and to Bernard——but Bernard does not praise her now to poor jealous little me.

So things go on, and I do not like her in the least, and I say hasty rude things, and repent and am sorry, and, in fact, am Maggie all over. Florence, being sweet-tempered herself, does not know I am not sweet-tempered, and joins in our walks with a quiet persistence and an absence of tact that render politeness on my part an impracticable theory. Every time she tacks herself on to us, I mount swiftly up to a white heat of impatience.

All of no use. I seem to hear Bernard saying: "We cannot leave her alone, Maggie; you would not leave the poor little girl alone?" And I feel he is right, and I clench my teeth hard, and walk along silent, until the tones of my voice are pitched to my liking.

At length, however, things take one turn too many. "There are limits to everything," I inform myself, as I stand at one of the pretty French windows that open on our lawn, brilliantly green after the rain. That lawn was a picture—red with geraniums in white stone baskets, and overflowing with beauty. In the centre, a fine old oak threw dark shadows on the ground; and there, in the shade, hidden away from the sun's hot glare, sat Florence Burnand—and my Bernard!

Flo' was looking up, and laughing. Her hat lay beside her, and through the thick boughs a sunbeam was sprinkling her brown hair with gold-dust, and sparkling on her pretty teeth. Blue butterflies were settling on her white dress, and Bernard's blue eyes were looking straight into hers!

I don't stop to reason. I don't stop to remind myself that when I am busy about the house, as I always am on Monday morning, neither Bernard nor Florence can be tied to my side; that, this granted, and they being the only two young people in the house, they must of necessity amuse each other: which they cannot do more innocently than by sitting on the lawn in my sight; neither do I reason that I do not literally expect Bernard's eyes to be lowered, save and except when they are turned towards me.

I flounce about angrily all the morning, and will not go near them. I can see Bernard looking up at the house, and I know very well he is looking for me; but the whistle that generally brings me to his side dies away on the air, and I don't go to him. Then they come in to lunch. Flo' with her delicate cheeks like rose-leaves, effect of sitting in the open air. I catch a glimpse of myself in the glass over my head, and my features are all twisted up to look sarcastic, and do not by any means add to my beauty.

I am very angry with Miss Burnand, and experience a childish desire to retaliate, by giving her the drumstick of a fowl. Manners prevail, and I give her a wing.

Bernard sees that something is wrong, but is, of course, too grand to try to set it right. He stretches his long legs, and stares at us both—rather lazily.

This is our first tiff, and I feel there is something exciting in it, though I am conscious of a vague suspicion that smooth sailing was much better. Ah me! how the small waves rise and swell! Shall I never again see the calm water?

I had only meant to be dignified and stately, and I soon grew tired of that, and would very gladly have come round, but—to my horror—there was a barrier. An invisible one, but none the less a barrier, and I could not break it down. I found, when I would have again addressed Bernard in the old familiar manner, a shade on the face that had so long been my own. I do not think he was aware of it. He was gayer than usual, and nobody else seemed to notice his constraint; but where Bernard is concerned, my senses are quickened, and to me it was too clear. This change in Bernard, arising from the change in me, was reflected in my voice, and so we went on, affecting each other, until at length we were rapidly drifting apart. And all outwardly was the same. Only now, instead of the old sweet whisper, "Come into the woods, Maggie!" there would be Bernard, hard and metallic, simply awaiting our pleasure to start. And Florence would fit on cream-tinted gloves. And I, foolish and jealous, could not stand it, and would let them go out into the quiet beauty of the woods, without me.

Of course, it was I who suffered most. Bernard had his sense of ill usage, and an Englishman's pleasure in sulking, but I was beyond such help. In the depths of my misery, I threw myself at full length on the floor, and was instantly half stunned by a projecting nail. Physical pain did me good, I crawled up again, and then, glad of the excuse to be extracted from my headache, I went off to bed.

In bed, instead of sleep, I find wisdom. On one point I am quite determined. I will not expose myself to Florence.

Presently she comes up to me, bringing her sweet face, and her wonderful absence of tact, into my sick room. She pities me very much, and tries in her small way to do me good.

"Such a lovely walk!" she breathes melodiously: though to me her voice sounds like any old raven's. I become at once uncomplimentary, and inaudible.

"It depends very much on one's thoughts though," she remarks, "whether one enjoys things or no. I was thinking of him."

At this juncture my newly gained wisdom serves me nothing. I jump up in bed, straight as an arrow, and the hot blood paints my face in streaks from brow to chin. In the midst of my passion, I try to be sarcastic.

"Oh, indeed?" I say; "and he, I suppose, was thinking of you?"

I laugh in what I intend to be an incredulous manner, but even to my own ears it sounds weird and wretched, and I feel that there are great tears in my eyes. Through them, through that mist of unshed tears, I look up at her. And she looks down at me amazed. "How strange you are!" she says; "and I didn't think you knew! Yes, we have been engaged these three years, but we are to be married almost directly now; he is coming down here next month."

She blushes. Her face fills with colour, until it is as red as the berries on a mountain ash, and her little delicate ears became scarlet.

I lean back on my pillows, ecstatically happy. It does not even occur to me to inquire to whom she is engaged, or anything about it. She is evidently nothing to Bernard, and, beyond that, nothing signifies. I think she is hurt by my want of sympathy, for she goes away sadly.

The instant she is gone, I jump off the bed, plunge my flushed face into a basin of water, brush up all the wet hair into a great bunch of curls, shake out my dress into folds, and go down-stairs, trusting to my composure for not telling tales.

I edge up to Bernard, and propose a walk. He agrees at once, although poor fellow, he has but just come from a walk. He looks hard at the glued-up appearance of my eyes.

Our walk, is of course, to the haystack, and, sitting on the top of that golden edifice, the last wave of trouble recedes from my heart.

Says Bernard to a person who is sobbing in his arms.

"Poor little Madge. What was it Maggie?"

But I cannot at first explain what it was. I lift up my tear-stained face, and then hide it away modestly in the stubble.

Presently, it transpires. Maggie has been jealous. Bernard opens his sleepy blue eyes wide at this intelligence, and reflects aloud.

"How strange," he says; "jealous of Flo!"

I tell myself how natural it is, that he should call my cousin—"Flo'."

"Quite absurd, wasn't it?" I ask nervously.

"Poor little girl," he says, "I am so sorry for her. She has been so constant to that scamp of a man. Only to-day she was telling me how thankful she should be when they really were married. And I daresay she will be, poor little thing, for what with his wretched health, and his endless suspicions, her life is at present not too easy."

I undergo pricks of conscience which send me clambering up on the stool of repentance.

"Oh, Bernard, I have been so unkind. But what a different sort of girl she looks. And if she cares about him, how can she be so nice to other people?"

"Other people! Mean me, I suppose?" says Bernard, giving me a little squeeze, and bending down to try to see my face. "But she wasn't particularly nice, Maggie. I was very sorry for her, of course, but I think I would sooner have strolled with my own little girl in the woods this afternoon."

This is as it should be. I compose myself to listen, and Bernard leaves off. I don't care. I am so very happy now.

When I go in, I catch Florence round the waist, and astonish my pretty cousin with some very warm kisses.

"I am so sorry for you, and so very very glad, and I am sure you will be happy when you're married."

Florence, the adaptable, fits into my new mood. Exchanging confidences, we compare notes. Her Bob and my Bernard might be twin brothers. The virtues of both are so excellent, and they are so very equally exempt from faults!

The Staffordshire roses are still scenting the air, though their petals begin to lie thick on the ground. Every one speaks of a fair little bride, whose statuesque figure shows soft through her veil, but the sensation she makes is lost upon me. I am dimly conscious of the white buds and blossoms in my own dark hair, of Bernard unusually solemn beside me, and all else is but a dream, from which I awake to find Florence married, and on my own hand, a link of shining gold that binds me for ever to Bernard.

We have risked all, and have married without his mother's wealth.

"Madge," he says, as he takes me away easily through a crowd that is wrapped up and absorbed in Florence. "Of whom now, in the future, do you mean to be jealous?"

I whisper up softly, "Of all those whom I think you love better than me."

Bernard lifts his hands and eyes, like a prophet seeing backward.

"Madge, I see in the distance, a host of such rivals, misty shadows in the background, softly turning into air."

I laugh at this conceit.

"Before what then, have they vanished?"

Then Bernard looking in my eyes, stoops down before me, and kisses the ring on my finger.

ANIMAL INTELLIGENCE.

A new champion for the Intelligence of Animals has revived the discussion in a book* full of facts and inferences which, if not all new, are all to the point. Without admitting that humans are the issue of quadrumans, he believes with Lactantius that animals possess in a certain measure the faculties of men, and that our inferior brethren, as St. Francis d'Assisi calls them, preceded us on earth, and were our first instructors. We take an example or two

* L'Intelligence des Animaux, par Ernest Menault. Paris: Hachette and Co.

of what the smallest and the dullest of them, as well as the biggest and cleverest—fleas and fish as well as elephants—can do.

There were Industrious Fleas before our time. Baron Walckenaer (who died in 1452) saw with his own eyes, for sixpence, in the Place de la Bourse, Paris, four learned fleas perform the manual exercise, standing upright on their hind legs, with a splinter of wood to serve for a pike. Two other fleas dragged a golden carriage: with a third flea, holding a whip, on the box for coachman. Another pair dragged a cannon. The flea-horses were harnessed by a golden chain fastened to their hind legs, which was never taken off. They had lived in this way two years and a half, without any mortality among them, when Walckenaer saw them. They took their meals on their keeper's arm. Their feats were performed on a plate of polished glass. When they were sulky, and refused to work, the man, instead of whipping them, held a bit of lighted charcoal over their backs, which very soon brought them to their senses.

But of what use is cleverness without a heart? The flea has strong maternal affections. She lays her eggs in the crannies of floors, in the bedding of animals, and on babies' night-clothes. When the helpless, transparent larvæ appear, the mother-flea feeds them, as the dove does its young, by discharging into their mouths the contents of her stomach. Grudge her not, therefore, one small drop of blood. For you, it is nothing but a flea-bite; for her, it is the life of her beloved offspring!

While pleading, however, for the flea, we cannot do as much for the bug, though he is gifted with fuller developed intelligence. An inquisitive gentleman, wishing to know how the bug became aware of a human presence, tried the following experiment. He got into a bed suspended from the ceiling, without any tester, in the middle of an unfurnished room. He then placed on the floor, a bug, who, guided probably by smell, pondered the means of reaching the bed. After deep reflection, he climbed up the wall, travelled straight across the ceiling to the spot immediately over the bed, and then dropped plump on the observer's nose. Was this, or was it not, an act of intelligence?

The Fish belongs to the great Flathead family. The same sort of platitude which you see in his person, doubtless extends to the whole of his character. You have met him somewhere in human shape—one of those pale-faced, wishy-washy gentlemen, whose passions have extinguished all heart and feeling. You often find them in diplomatic regions, and can't tell whether they are fish or flesh. But if their mental powers are less developed, their term of existence is more extended. They gain in longevity what they lose in warmth of temperament.

Nevertheless, the skill with which the stickleback constructs his nest is now a matter of natural history. Other fishes display an address which *we* acquire only by long and constant practice. One fellow, with a muzzle prolonged into a long narrow tube (which he uses as a popgun), prowls about the banks of tidal rivers. On spying a fly on the water-weeds, he slyly swims up till he gets within five or six feet of it. He then shoots it with water from his proboscis, never failing to bring down his game. A governor of the hospital at Batavia, doubting the fact, though attested by credible witnesses, procured some of these fish, to watch their pranks. He stuck a fly on a pin at the end of a stick, and placed it so as to attract their notice. To his great delight, they shot it with their water-guns, for which he rewarded them with a treat of insects.

The pike has proved himself not only intelligent, but even capable—disbelieve it who will—of gratitude.

"While living at Durham," says Dr. Warwick, "I took a walk one evening in Lord Stamford's park. On reaching a pond in which fish were kept ready for use, I observed a fine pike of some six pounds' weight. At my approach he darted away like an arrow. In his hurry, he knocked his head against an iron hook fixed in a post in the water, fracturing his skull and injuring the optic nerve on one side of his head. He appeared to suffer terrible pain; he plunged into the mud, floundered hither and thither, and at last, leaping out of the water, fell on the bank. On examination, a portion of the brain was seen protruding through the fractured skull.

"This I carefully restored to its place, making use of a small silver toothpick to raise the splinters of broken bone. The fish remained quiet during the operation; when it was over he plunged into the pond. At first, his sufferings appeared to be relieved; but in the course of a few minutes he began rushing right and left until he again leaped out of the water.

"I called the keeper, and with his assistance applied a bandage to the fracture. That done, we restored him to the pond and left him to his fate. Next morning, as soon as I reached the water's edge, the pike swam to meet me quite close to the bank, and laid his head upon my feet. I thought this an extraordinary proceeding. Without further delay, I examined the wound and found it was healing nicely. I then strolled for some time by the side of the pond. The fish swam after me, following my steps, and turning as I turned.

"The following day, I brought a few young friends with me to see the fish. He swam towards me as before. Little by little he became so tame as to come to my whistle and eat out of my hand. With other persons, on the contrary, he continued as shy and as wild as ever."

This anecdote is averred to have been read, in 1850, before the Liverpool Literary and Philosophical Society.

The elephant, with a sort of humorous justice, is given to return injuries or insults in kind. In Madagascar, an elephant's cornac, happening to

have a cocoa-nut in his hand, thought fit, out of bravado, to break it on the animal's head. The elephant made no protest at the time; but next day, passing a fruit-stall, he took a cocoa-nut in his trunk and returned the cornac's compliment so vigorously on *his* head, that he killed him on the spot.

If vindictive, the elephant is also grateful. At Pondicherry, a soldier who treated an elephant to a dram of arrack every time he received his pay, found himself the worse for liquor. When the guard were about to carry him off to prison, he took refuge under the elephant and fell asleep. His protector would allow no one to approach, and watched him carefully all night. In the morning, after caressing with his trunk, he dismissed him to settle with the authorities as he best could.

Both revenge and gratitude imply intelligence; still more does the application of an unforeseen expedient. A train of artillery going to Seringapatam, had to cross the shingly bed of a river. A man who was sitting on a gun-carriage, fell; in another second the wheel would have passed over his body. An elephant walking by the side of the carriage saw the danger, and instantly, without any order from his keeper, lifted the wheel from the ground, leaving the fallen man uninjured.

A WOMAN'S JUSTICE.

IN EIGHT CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

"Draw up the blind a little higher, Cecil," murmured the peevish, fretful, and complaining voice of Gerald Middleton. "There! now it's too high! do you not see how the evening sun comes streaming in, enough to ruin stronger eyes than mine. I think that is better—no it is not —there let it alone! I'll do it myself." The invalid attempted to rise from the sofa, but his sister exclaimed, "You must not move, dear Gerald! have a little patience and I will set it right."

"Patience?" he repeated, petulantly, "I think I have patience; I eat patience—drink patience—live on patience. You and that stupid nurse are just alike; you have two pairs of left hands between you, and do nothing right. Can't you let the blind alone? Now it is darkness visible! Ring the bell for South; but for South I should have been dead long ago. You and nurse Graves would have killed me! 'Graves'! it was a bit of refined cruelty in you, Cecil, to engage a woman with that suggestive name; you had better advertise for one of the name of Funeral —Nurse Funeral!—a good joke, faith! only Funeral should precede and not follow Graves —eh, Cecil?"

There was no reply; his sister still persevering in her endeavour to arrange the blind, looking back at every movement to see if the sunshine was shielded from the invalid's worn and rugged face. At last South entered, with the peculiar noiseless step that shows familiarity with the sick room.

"Where have you been all the day South?" demanded his master (South was one of the old world servants, who called Major Middleton "master" and not "governor" or "the major").

"I gave you your draught, sir, at five, as I promised Mrs. Graves I would when she went to see her son," and South glanced at the clock on the chimney piece, that told it was a quarter past six.

"And what is the matter with her son? Fever, or small-pox, or diphtheria, I suppose? One of the cursed things she will be sure to bring me. One word for all; listen to me, Cecil, that woman shall not return."

"If you please, sir——" began South.

"Not one word! I have said it; no one with common sense would permit a nurse to visit a sick son who is living in a back slum; but I am surrounded by fools—you need not colour up, Cecil; do not let your temper break out, in that way. I wonder you have not some little feeling—but you do not care how you agitate me. It was clear insanity to permit that woman to go to her son—in typhus fever; was it typhus or small-pox, you said, South?"

The question induced South to make a bolt at the truth.

"Neither, sir; he is going to be married to-morrow; him and his young woman live at Richmond, on the top of the hill; and as the old lady could not go to the wedding to-morrow they both came to get her blessing, sir; that was all."

"Pair of idiots!" exclaimed the major, more irritated by the explanation than by the response to his surmises. "I wonder you are not ashamed to repeat such trash, South; as if a blessing could attend such tomfoolery! Marry! and what have they to live on, what have they to starve on? Can't you answer?"

"He is head gardener to Sir James Lacy, sir, eighty pounds a year, and his cottage, and milk, and vegetables, and coal, and she is such a pretty girl."

"They have not been in this house?" Major Middleton's eyes—they were steel blue, and flashed uncomfortably when he was irritated—gleamed.

"No, sir! oh not a step in it; they walked up and down outside until Mrs. Graves asked my mistress for half an hour's leave, and I saw her as she passed the pantry window."

If a look could have killed poor South, his days would have been numbered. The major looked at him with deep and deadly scorn.

"Saw who?" he snarled. "The nurse?"

"No, sir; the pretty girl."

"South, you are an idle scoundrel!" exclaimed the major, fast working himself into a state of irritability that was certain to end in a paroxysm of coughing, always dreaded by his patient sister. "I say you are an idle scoundrel," he repeated; "instead of attending to me, to spend your hours, at your time of life, watching a trapesing girl and talking to me—me! of marri——"

The enemy seized on, and shook, every fibre

of his attenuated frame; Cecil pressed her hands on his brow, while South lifted him higher and still higher on the sofa; at last the paroxysm was over, and the poor irritable sufferer struggled, first flushed, then became pale and panted, until able to take some soothing medicine, which in a few minutes lulled him to sleep. His sister and his servant watched him without moving, until, at length, Miss Middleton sank noiselessly into a seat, and pointed to the door. South crept stealthily out of the room, and after a time, when assured that her brother really slept, Miss Middleton drew a letter from her bosom and began unfolding it on her lap; but the paper was obstinate and *would* give that inexplicable sound, which is more disturbing to an invalid than positive noise. Cecil ceased, and put the cherished letter into her pocket; then bent forward and clasped her hands on her lap.

Let us pause and look at her; you will hardly be content with a passing glance at Cecil Middleton. There is a fascination about her, possessed but by few who are considered beautiful, if you observe the loving and uplooking meaning in her large dark eyes; the often tremulous motion of her well-formed lips, which when they speak call up more dimples than you can count; the oval of her firm yet womanly face, and the dignity of her brow, tempered at that moment by the sympathy she felt for a brother who had caused her much sorrow, and done her much wrong! If you take in all this, as you may do in a couple of minutes, you will want to know her, and when you know her, be you man or woman, you *must* love her. I do not mean that, being a man, you must "fall," as it is vulgarly called, "in love" with her; but you would receive her into your heart as you would a thought new and pure, a holy inspiration; and you would be happy in her society, and seek to earn her good opinion, seeing that neither envy nor jealousy disturbed her; you would even make her your confidant and talk freely to her of the girl you hoped to marry, and she would do her best to confirm you in that love, and without any profession would counsel you as if she were your sister; and while she laughed and jested, and danced with children they would look into her eyes and believe in her as if she were their own mother, and tell her all their troubles, which would vanish beneath the influence of her sympathy.

Her voice is low, and soft, and clear. Her head bent, as it now is, shows the beauty of her dark waving hair, which is folded round the head, and then coiled at the back into a soft knot, the ends falling in curls over the neck.

After a time she ceases to look at Major Middleton, and it seems as though her inquiring eyes were seeking to scan the future. Yet it seems plain enough; there are not six, no, not three, months' life in her brother; whose sleep might now be called tranquil, but that every respiration is a sob, wrestling against the disease that seeks to stifle life. When her brother no longer lives, Cecil will be his heiress! Major Middleton dying without children, his sister becomes mistress of Middleton Lea and three thousand a year; were it not so, she would be compelled to live on the interest of her own four or five thousand pounds. But there is no danger of that. She has been the most tender and patient of sisters, though she knows that Gerald, if he desired to do so, has not the power to will away the property—it *must* be hers. All his life he has been tyrannical and exacting in the cruellest sense of the words; a selfish man, though a brave soldier; not extravagant; never generous, even to himself; it is needless, now, when he is dying, to say how his hard nature paralysed, if it did not break, the heart of his widowed mother; and how he, who could have seen his sister a happy wife, years ago, kept her back instead ot helping her on to the attainment of the one desire of her full, pure heart.

As she sat, recalling a past that had never dimmed or changed, and then casting pitying glances at the brother whom, though she did not love nor trust, she served, South re-entered the room, and stood close to the screen. He beckoned his mistress. South was an Irishman, and though long residence in England and abroad had rendered his national accent almost imperceptible when he spoke quietly, his tone and a peculiar idiom often indicated his native land.

"I'll go in and sit by the master, miss, if you'll please to let me—there's one below wanting you."

"Wanting me, South! Surely you said I could not leave my brother?"

"Indeed, then, I did not, miss."

"South! After my orders!"

"Go and see, miss."

Cecil looked at the old servant, and at once knew who it was that "wanted her."

She moved forward, but, as if struck by sudden blindness, her hand groped for the wall.

"Oh, dear mistress, keep a good heart. I never saw him look better nor handsomer; the first look at him will strengthen you."

"God bless her!" he murmured to himself, as, having overcome her momentary weakness, she passed down the stairs, at first tremblingly, then swiftly. "God bless her! it's the world's wonder she is, if the world only knew it. Well, there's life-long happiness in store for her, that's a comfort, though I'll be sorry for the poor master too, poisoned as he is with fair wickedness. Something unbeknown to us all must have turned his blood into gall long ever ago, or he could not torture *her* as he does! I shouldn't like, for one, to have the cleaning out of his heart after the life leaves it!" And he glided into the sick man's room.

CHAPTER II.

Cecil Middleton and Ronald Chester had not met for several months; and letters are but cold expositors of feelings. It was some moments before either could speak; but the

pressure of heart to heart, in the clasp of strong and intense love, was more eloquent than words. The disappointing past was forgotten: they felt but the ecstacy of reunion. Whatever trials they had undergone, that cruellest trial of all—mistrust—had never poisoned their affection, never even in dreams disturbed their faith each in the other. Let what would come, their mutual love could not even end in this life, for they enjoyed the happiness of believing that a pure and earnest earth-love will be still more purified and perfected in eternity.

Ronald was the first to speak. He raised her face from his bosom, and gazed into the depths of her eyes, as if he would read her very soul—and so he did.

"My own, my very own!" he said. "Incapable of change—so faithful and so true to a man of ruined fortunes——"

"But spotless name," she answered, proudly. "And oh, Ronald! life is too short to cherish, even for a moment, your plan of exile to create another fortune. Now, I am despotic; you shall not leave England; it will be a little—only a little longer. I shall be privileged to prove my love, as few women can, by giving you back, as it were, the fortune which no forethought of yours could have preserved."

"But, Cecil; a man to be obliged to a woman——!"

Cecil placed her hand on his lips.

"There is no man or woman in the case," she said; "it is simply love for love. Long ago, when you were rich, and I had nothing but a few paltry pounds, and there was reason to believe that poor Gerald, so handsome and distinguished as he was, a hero, a man of fashion and fortune, courted and followed by women whose adulation was sufficient to turn a stronger brain, would have married, and that other heirs would have claimed Middleton Lea; it was *then* you distinguished your Cecil from among women more rich, more beautiful, more accomplished. It was then you gave her your heart, it was then you offered her your hand——"

"And," interrupted Ronald Chester, "it was *then* that your brother's cruel selfishness interfered to prevent our union. You were necessary to his comfort, and *he* blighted our loves and lives. He treated me with insolence, because my father's wealth had been earned and our estate was not ancestral—*he* scoffed——"

"Peace, peace," murmured Cecil. "Time and his present state must tide over such memories. I shall soon be all your own, though not even the richness of that blessing can stifle the desire that he may be spared a little longer, and not pass into his Lord's presence with an unregenerate nature. I weary Heaven with prayers that his heart may soften. Oh! you don't know the terror of those awful night watches. When he sends the nurse away, and——but I must not stain with sorrow the few moments that are our own. We shall be so happy, Ronald, so happy!"

"My own! I am torn between my desire to be with you more than ever now, when the spring time—almost the summer—of our youth is past, and my aching want is to win back in another country what I have lost in this."

"Oh man, proud man!" interrupted Cecil, "who would put aside this commonwealth of love; who would live and compel me to live, in solitude, our hearts withered by hope deferred!

"Cecil!" exclaimed her lover, "if you had but married me when we first told each other of our love."

"Let the past be past," she said; "let us think, after the darkness is gone, of the sunshine that *must* be ours."

I would not, if I could, chronicle the murmured and spoken words that still more sanctified their meeting. The disbelief in long abiding and unselfish attachment is one of the bad signs of our time. There are many, well stricken in the conventionalities of love à la mode, who hold in worldly contempt, even if they do not quite discredit, the entire oneness in spirit and in truth which renders life to those who are devoted each to the other, alike, amid storm and sunshine, an unspeakable and absolute joy. Such love is utterly incapable of change, and preserves the richly-dowered hearts in all the greenery of youth, even when their brows are crowned by the snows of age.

Their happiness was broken in upon by South, who exclaimed, "The master, miss, wants you; the restless fit is on him worse than ever; he calls for you, miss, and the nurse. I think you must let me run for the doctor."

"The drops, South," said Cecil!

"He threw the bottle at me, when I mentioned them, I never saw him so violent. If you will go up, miss, I will find the doctor!"

"You must not leave Miss Middleton alone, South," said Mr. Chester. "Tell me the doctor's address. I will send him."

CHAPTER III.

And so they parted. She to listen to reproach and abuse, every word she uttered in her patient tenderness but adding fuel to the flame—until another paroxysm of that fearful cough knelled through the room, and he sank upon his cushions helpless and speechless. After such outbreaks, he was silent from exhaustion. At last, without raising his hand, he beckoned her to him with his long lean finger. She knelt by his side, bending to catch his words.

"Were you out?"

"No."

"Some one below then?"

"Yes."

"Who?"

She had never told an untruth to him or to any one else in her life: her cheek flushed and he saw it.

"Chester?" he cried between his strong white teeth. "Chester! And he dares to come here! To take stock, I suppose. But by——"

And he swore an oath, that made Cecil tremble.

"You shall have your rue with a difference, there is yet time,—time to punish you both. Turn that lying hound, South, out of the room. Shut the door as you go, sir, no creeping, shut it with a bang, sir, like the sound of a cannon!"

Strengthened by his purpose, he managed to raise himself——

"Give me some wine, give me some brandy, give me anything for half an hour's strength. I told you to destroy all my papers, all unread, now festering within that desk; you have sworn to do it, and you are truth itself; you are the only Middleton on record who never lied. Wine, wine, Cecil!" She poured some into a tumbler. "Fill it, fill it!"

He snatched it from her trembling hand, gulped it down, and cast the glass from him. "Now, I will not spare you. You shall live, as I have lived, with the sword above your head; but it will be sharper, sharper to you than to me! Destroy not one of these papers. It is my last injunction. Not One! Search, search, search, and enjoy, you, and that ledger-man, enjoy what you will discover! I'm glad, glad, I did not destroy what I——" the last sentence came thickly and faintly from his lips, he signed for more wine, and having drank it threw his long wasted limbs off the sofa. He seemed to desire to stand, and Cecil tried to help him, "Keep back," he muttered, and a fearful change passed over his face, and he laughed hideously. "I should like to see you, and him, when the dread of the—what might be—turns you blue! You are not so bad, Cecil; but keep the secret, Cecil, until after your marriage, or you would lose your beggarly lover. You are a poor washed out thing, Cecil, need regilding, gilding! Now, unless you want me to curse you where you stand, promise to read, to search out and read, every line, every line you find! Promise!"

"I do," she said.

"A treat, a treat, a treat to dash down the cup of happiness when it is brimming full! What, doctor!" he continued, as the physician entered. "Oh I am better. I have played off a joke, a joke, by Jove!" At that instant the bells of a neighbouring church commenced their weekly evening practice.

"The bells of Middleton Lea!" he exclaimed, and his head fell forward. "The bells, the bells ringing for my coming of age!" They lifted him back on the sofa, he gasped out a few wandering words, and but few; his mind had strayed back to his childhood, and he spoke as if to his mother, lovingly as a child would, and asked her to kiss him.

Gerald Middleton fell asleep that night to wake no more in this world.

CHAPTER IV.

The last ceremony was over. Major Middleton had left no will, encumbered his property with no gifts, no legacies, and Cecil Middleton was an undisputed heiress. Having locked herself into the library, she was seated with her brother's desk open before her; she had deferred opening it, day after day; she had gone through and arranged all other papers with her "man of business;" all was clear and straight-forward. But an undefined dread took hold of her whenever she looked on that grim ebony desk, clasped and studded with iron. She had parted with Ronald Chester in the drawing-room: only until the evening, when he was to return and dine with her and her lawyer, who was an old family friend. She would get through those papers before dinner, there were not so many of them.

Poor Cecil! Often her cheek flushed and her hand trembled; there were delicate notes, which a man of honour would have destroyed; locks of hair of all tints; trinkets; some Indian, but more frequently French, minatures; everything she unrolled, and having examined cast into the fire. There were letters containing the most bitter reproaches, one evidently from a husband whose wife had abandoned him for the protection of Major Middleton; all the world had heard of that, and Cecil remembered when the fair frail woman had been her school-mate, and child friend. There were letters containing passionate protestations of love; on the back of one, her brother had sketched the inamorata, in his ever active spirit of caricature.

His mother's letters and hers, received when he was abroad, were clasped together and placed in a separate drawer, quite away from the contamination of the other contents of his desk. She thanked him for that, and tears, large heavy tears, fell on the records of his mother's love. She had hoped that her task was ended, a few party coloured embers were all that remained of what had once been warm and fresh and treasured. All gone except that last pure and precious packet. She murmured a few words of gratitude, and could not help wondering again and again, why at the last he had set her such a task, sufficiently painful without a doubt, and yet! was there anything else? She tried, and retried every spring and projection, fearing there must be something more, and at last, at the back of a small drawer she saw a tiny steel knob; she pressed it, a little door flew open; within was a roll of paper, or papers, tied together with a bit of twine, and something—a flat packet—round which a newspaper had been crushed and twisted. Cecil unfolded it, and saw a large case covered with soiled white velvet. It was difficult to open, the fastening was stiff, the minature (for such it was) was laid on its face, it had endured rough usage, the gold was battered as if it had been crushed on the ground by a heavy foot. When Cecil lifted it, the shattered glass that once had protected the delicate painting, fell on the table; the picture was double, the likenesses of two persons, one evidently her brother, the other a dark woman, in young but imperial beauty; her right hand was clasped within his, her left hung lightly over his shoulder, and the thick ring of marriage and its brilliant keeper circling the third finger; the attitude of that hand seemed to say, "look at this, I am a wedded wife."

Cecil was spell-bound; her gaze was fastened on the little brown left hand. Was that woman really her brother's wife? His "wife!" Cecil's head fell on her clasped hands, and but for her laboured breathing one would have thought she had fainted. When she recovered self-possession, she glanced furtively at the picture, blurred and blotted as it was. There were Gerald's full brow, his keen blue uncompromising eyes, his implacable mouth, his fair hair. Something had been written on the glass. Cecil laid the broken pieces over the ivory; the writing had been scrawled across the woman's face; it was still legible—two cruel words were there—"Curse her!"

Sick at heart, Cecil undid the twine, and outspread the roll. It contained a few letters of recent date, written in a woman's cramped hand, with a pen like a pin. Mechanically she read the first; it was expressed as though the writer had thought in a foreign language, and translated her thoughts into English. It commenced with my "Idol husband," and ended with your "Doating wife."

"Wife!" How was it possible? She scrutinised the date of that letter. He had been that year in Germany—at Spa she believed—and had remained there some time. He had written to his sister that he was there ill; but his London physician had laughed when she said so, and observed, "He thought the major was in the Highlands." She remembered that now.

Her brother married?

What a chaos the bare thought produced! What a revolution! Ronald! her Ronald *not* master of Middleton Lea! Gerald married!

A little longer search with trembling fingers. A marriage certificate! Marriage solemnised between Mabel Elizabeth Le Roy and Edward Gerald Middleton, in Scotland, the place near Dunkeld, the name of the clergyman, all clear enough, and a witness—Charles Dacre.

"Charles Dacre!" Her brother, Cecil knew, had had a groom or some servant of that name, a long time ago; but past and present were so mingled in her bewildered brain that she lost all power of distinguishing one from the other. She clasped her hands over her eyes to shut out—what?

Ay, what, indeed!

Gradually she sank from her seat upon her knees; her hands still folded over her eyes; her lips moved by earnest prayer, silent yet eloquent in entreaty to Him who hears our thoughts! Her appeal was not in vain. She had been well practised in self-control, but she did not now rely on self; she called humbly to HIM to help her, and help came.

Calmed and strengthened, she arose and commenced, first turning over and then steadily reading the letters. She read the certificate over again. There was no envelope or direction among the papers, nor had the writer once named him—he was always addressed as "My own darling," "My heart's idol," or with some such expression of endearment, even if reproaches as to absence or neglect followed the first line. At all events, Charles Dacre had been present at the marriage.

Gerald had evidently parted from her in anger, and accused her of want of truth, of duplicity, of extravagance; told her how necessary it was that his marriage should be kept secret, it was so important to his prospects that it should not be known; and the vain, frivolous, stormy beauty had still the noble love to assure him that she would be torn in pieces by wild horses sooner than betray their secret until he gave her permission to do so.

Cecil felt herself shivering at her brother's falsehood; there was *no* reason connected with his prospects why his marriage should have been secret; and this beautiful woman, warmed into life and love by the temperature of a tropical sky, when quite a child (for she spoke of her sixteenth birthday), had become his wife and his victim. She read on. Under other circumstances she would have cast the letters aside as the ravings of an undisciplined, passion-full girl; but they possessed a fascination she could not withstand. She held the last in her hand; the writing was straggling and incoherent—it told of the birth of a child—his boy!

Why had he been angry? Had any one maligned her to him? her, his faithful, loving wife—"Little Brown Bess," as he had often called her, the mother of his child? Why should he write cruel words now? And the boy was so like him—such a beauty!

Cecil laid down the letter, which had been torn across. She was quite calm now.

If this were true, if her brother had left a son, all her prospects had been made into thin air and vanished. She was no longer an heiress; she no longer had the power of restoring her beloved to his position; her dream of life was over. This knowledge did not come to her in a mist; it was first the cloud the size of a man's hand, increasing and increasing until it grew into a black wall between her and her husband's triumphs for evermore. Gerald's wife — Gerald's son — what had the poor thing done that he should have scarred her beautiful face with his curse? And the child—where was it? The facts were clear before her, but the details, the proofs (were there *proofs?*), were all confused. One dreary fact seemed to press on her heart and brain. Chester—Chester—to whom she had promised wealth and happiness! Sob after sob burst from her heaving breast, until her agony sought relief in words, and she repeated again and again, "Oh, my love! my love! my love!"

She gradually replaced the papers in their concealment, locked the desk, and crept stealthily into the hall. Some undefined suggestion took possession of her mind that she had no right to be there.

She met South, who at once saw that some fresh sorrow had stricken his lady. Instead of passing on, Cecil paused, and said:

"South, do you remember my brother having a groom—pad-groom, I think—of the name of Dacre?"

The expression of South's genial good-natured face changed at once.

"Oh, the blackguard!" he exclaimed; and in the same moment added, "I'm sure I beg your pardon, Miss Cecil; I should not have said that, though it was the truth that sprang out of me. I never could abide him. The master thought I was jealous of him, which the Heavens knows I was not—neither jealous of him nor what he got—hush money for many a turn of the poor master's, who was always wild, as no one knows better than yourself, Miss Middleton; only in course a sister's the last to know the turns of her brother's wildness, barring a wife——"

"Do you know where Dacre is?"

"No, miss, I can't say I do, though I have a guess. I believe the master gave him a power of money to go to America after they came home last time, and master in such a terrible temper from—well, he called it Germany—and Dacre went; but the ship foundered at sea, and all perished.

"Of course my brother, Major Middleton, knew that?"

"Yes, miss; I told him when I saw it in the paper."

"What did he say?"

"'Ring the bells, South'—never a word more."

Sick and broken hearted, Cecil entered her own room. On the table was a bouquet of her favourite flowers that Chester had placed in the hand he so warmly kissed that morning.

She drew his miniature from her bosom, and, falling on her knees, pressed it between her clasped hands, murmuring:

"Help—oh help me, my Heavenly Father! Look with pity and mercy on me, while you strengthen me to perform my duty! Father, make me strong for justice!" And then, opening her hands and gazing through the mist of tears on the beloved face which for years had been her heart-companion, her comforter, her joy, she kissed it tenderly, murmuring: "My love! my love! my love!"

"Oh, my love! my love!"

She could not think of or count the time; but at last she heard the bell of her little clock chime six. In another hour she must meet Ronald Chester and her lawyer. The evening was closing in, and she was seated in the drawing-room, when they entered.

Ronald's footsteps, so light and buoyant, struck on her heart. She arose to meet him, but she could not advance, and was glad of an excuse to withdraw her hand from his affectionate clasp and give it to Mr. Cathcart. The strong sympathy which existed between Cecil and her betrothed made him feel, rather than see, that she had sustained a severe shock. The pressure of a beloved hand is more eloquent than words.

"What is it, Cecil? You are not well?" he whispered, tenderly, as he sought to penetrate the twilight and read her looks.

"By-and-by I will tell you," she murmured—"after dinner. I am so glad Mr. Cathcart is here."

Mr. Cathcart was a thorough man of the world, and well knew the best way of dispersing a difficulty. He saw that something was wrong, but asked no questions, and talked incessantly. Cecil could not meet Ronald's eyes. He had left her so full of joyous life in the morning; they had walked up and down the drawing-room planning the happy future, upon which no cloud rested; and now she could hardly frame a sentence!

She rose as soon as dinner was ended, and said, "I will wait for you in the library."

Ronald opened the door, and followed her into the hall.

"My own Cecil, what is it?" he whispered tenderly.

"There are some papers you and Mr. Cathcart must see to immediately."

Lovingly he took her sweet face between his hands, and saw that her eyes were brimming over with tears.

"My darling, what is it?"

"A little patience, Ronald. I will be ready for you in half an hour."

He circled her with his arm and supported her into the library. The lamp was lighted, and cast a strong light on the ebony writing-desk, which looked hideously black and stern. Ronald would have persuaded her to leave all business until the next day, she looked so unwell, but she would not. "Leave me," she said, "for half an hour, and then—both of you come to me!"

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THE MOONSTONE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WOMAN IN WHITE," &c. &c.

SECOND PERIOD. THE DISCOVERY OF THE TRUTH. (1848—1849.)

FOURTH NARRATIVE.

Extracted from the Journal of Ezra Jennings.

1849.—June 15th. . . . With some interruption from patients, and some interruption from pain, I finished my letter to Miss Verinder in time for to-day's post. I failed to make it as short a letter as I could have wished. But I think I have made it plain. It leaves her entirely mistress of her own decision. If she consents to assist the experiment, she consents of her own free will, and not as a favour to Mr. Franklin Blake or to me.

June 16th.—Rose late, after a dreadful night; the vengeance of yesterday's opium, pursuing me through a series of frightful dreams. At one time, I was whirling through empty space with the phantoms of the dead, friends and enemies together. At another, the one beloved face which I shall never see again, rose at my bedside, hideously phosphorescent in the black darkness, and glared and grinned at me. A slight return of the old pain, at the usual time in the early morning, was welcome as a change. It dispelled the visions—and it was bearable because it did that.

My bad night made it late in the morning, before I could get to Mr. Franklin Blake. I found him stretched on the sofa, breakfasting on brandy and soda water, and a dry biscuit.

"I am beginning, as well as you could possibly wish," he said. "A miserable, restless night; and a total failure of appetite this morning. Exactly what happened last year, when I gave up my cigars. The sooner I am ready for my second dose of laudanum, the better I shall be pleased."

"You shall have it on the earliest possible day," I answered. "In the meantime, we must be as careful of your health as we can. If we allow you to become exhausted, we shall fail in that way. You must get an appetite for your dinner. In other words, you must get a ride or a walk this morning, in the fresh air."

"I will ride, if they can find me a horse here. By-the-bye, I wrote to Mr. Bruff yesterday. Have you written to Miss Verinder?"

"Yes—by last night's post."

"Very good. We shall have some news worth hearing, to tell each other to-morrow. Don't go yet! I have a word to say to you. You appeared to think, yesterday, that our experiment with the opium was not likely to be viewed very favourably by some of my friends. You were quite right. I call old Gabriel Betteredge one of my friends; and you will be amused to hear that he protested strongly when I saw him yesterday. 'You have done a wonderful number of foolish things in the course of your life, Mr. Franklin; but this tops them all!' There is Betteredge's opinion! You will make allowance for his prejudices, I am sure, if you and he happen to meet."

I left Mr. Blake, to go my rounds among my patients; feeling the better and the happier even for the short interview that I had had with him.

What is this secret of the attraction that there is for me in this man? Does it only mean that I feel the contrast between the frankly kind manner in which he has allowed me to become acquainted with him, and the merciless dislike and distrust with which I am met by other people? Or is there really something in him which answers to the yearning that I have for a little human sympathy—the yearning, which has survived the solitude and persecution of many years; which seems to grow keener and keener, as the time comes nearer and nearer when I shall endure and feel no more? How useless to ask these questions! Mr. Blake has given me a new interest in life. Let that be enough, without seeking to know what the new interest is.

June 17th.—Before breakfast, this morning, Mr. Candy informed me that he was going away for a fortnight, on a visit to a friend in the south of England. He gave me as many special directions, poor fellow, about the patients, as if he still had the large practice which he possessed before he was taken ill. The practice is worth little enough now! Other doctors have superseded *him;* and nobody who can help it will employ *me.*

It is perhaps fortunate that he is to be away just at this time. He would have been mortified

if I had not informed him of the experiment which I am going to try with Mr. Blake. And I hardly know what undesirable results might not have happened, if I had taken him into my confidence. Better as it is. Unquestionably, better as it is.

The post brought me Miss Verinder's answer, after Mr. Candy had left the house.

A charming letter! It gives me the highest opinion of her. There is no attempt to conceal the interest that she feels in our proceedings. She tells me, in the prettiest manner, that my letter has satisfied her of Mr. Blake's innocence, without the slightest need (so far as she is concerned) of putting my assertion to the proof. She even upbraids herself—most undeservedly, poor thing!—for not having divined at the time what the true solution of the mystery might really be. The motive underlying all this, proceeds evidently from something more than a generous eagerness to make atonement for a wrong which she has innocently inflicted on another person. It is plain that she has loved him, throughout the estrangement between them. In more than one place, the rapture of discovering that he has deserved to be loved, breaks its way innocently through the stoutest formalities of pen and ink, and even defies the stronger restraint still of writing to a stranger. Is it possible (I ask myself, in reading this delightful letter) that I, of all men in the world, am chosen to be the means of bringing these two young people together again? My own happiness has been trampled under foot; my own love has been torn from me. Shall I live to see a happiness of others, which is of my making—a love renewed, which is of my bringing back? Oh merciful Death, let me see it before your arms enfold me, before your voice whispers to me, 'Rest at last!'

There are two requests contained in the letter. One of them prevents me from showing it to Mr. Franklin Blake. I am authorised to tell him that Miss Verinder willingly consents to place her house at our disposal; and, that said, I am desired to add no more.

So far, it is easy to comply with her wishes. But the second request embarrasses me seriously.

Not content with having written to Mr. Betteredge, instructing him to carry out whatever directions I may have to give, Miss Verinder asks leave to assist me, by personally superintending the restoration of her own sitting-room. She only waits a word of reply from me, to make the journey to Yorkshire, and to be present as one of the witnesses on the night when the opium is tried for the second time.

Here, again, there is a motive under the surface; and, here again, I fancy that I can find it out.

What she has forbidden me to tell Mr. Franklin Blake, she is (as I interpret it) eager to tell him with her own lips, *before* he is put to the test which is to vindicate his character in the eyes of other people. I understand and admire this generous anxiety to acquit him, without waiting until his innocence may, or may not, be proved. It is the atonement that she is longing to make, poor girl, after having innocently and inevitably wronged him. But the thing cannot be done. I have no sort of doubt that the agitation which a meeting between them would produce on both sides—the old feelings which it would revive, the new hopes which it would awaken—would, in their effect on the mind of Mr. Blake, be almost certainly fatal to the success of our experiment. It is hard enough, as things are, to reproduce in him the conditions as they existed, or nearly as they existed, last year. With new interests and new emotions to agitate him, the attempt would be simply useless.

And yet, knowing this, I cannot find it in my heart to disappoint her. I must try if I can discover some new arrangement, before post-time, which will allow me to say Yes to Miss Verinder, without damage to the service which I have bound myself to render to Mr. Franklin Blake.

Two o'clock.—I have just returned from my round of medical visits; having begun, of course, by calling at the hotel.

Mr. Blake's report of the night is the same as before. He has had some intervals of broken sleep, and no more. But he feels it less to-day, having slept after yesterday's dinner. This after-dinner sleep is the result, no doubt, of the ride which I advised him to take. I fear I shall have to curtail his restorative exercise in the fresh air. He must not be too well; he must not be too ill. It is a case (as the sailors would say) of very fine steering.

He has not heard yet from Mr. Bruff. I found him eager to know if I had received any answer from Miss Verinder.

I told him exactly what I was permitted to tell, and no more. It was quite needless to invent excuses for not showing him the letter. He told me bitterly enough, poor fellow, that he understood the delicacy which disinclined me to produce it. "She consents, of course, as a matter of common courtesy and common justice," he said. "But she keeps her own opinion of me, and waits to see the result." I was sorely tempted to hint that he was now wronging her as she had wronged him. On reflection, I shrank from forestalling her in the double luxury of surprising and forgiving him.

My visit was a very short one. After the experience of the other night, I have been compelled once more to give up my dose of opium. As a necessary result, the agony of the disease that is in me has got the upper hand again. I felt the attack coming on, and left abruptly, so as not to alarm or distress him. It only lasted a quarter of an hour this time, and it left me strength enough to go on with my work.

Five o'clock.—I have written my reply to Miss Verinder.

The arrangement I have proposed reconciles the interests on both sides, if she will only consent to it. After first stating the objections that there are to a meeting between Mr. Blake and herself, before the experiment is tried, I have suggested that she should so time her journey as to arrive at the house privately, on the evening when we make the attempt. Travelling by the afternoon train from London, she would delay her arrival until nine o'clock. At that hour, I have undertaken to see Mr. Blake safely into his bedchamber; and so to leave Miss Verinder free to occupy her own rooms until the time comes for administering the laudanum. When that has been done, there can be no objection to her watching the result, with the rest of us. On the next morning, she shall show Mr. Blake (if she likes) her correspondence with me, and shall satisfy him in that way that he was acquitted in her estimation, before the question of his innocence was put to the proof.

In that sense, I have written to her. This is all that I can do to-day. To-morrow I must see Mr. Betteredge, and give the necessary directions for re-opening the house.

June 18th.—Late again, in calling on Mr. Franklin Blake. More of that horrible pain in the early morning; followed, this time, by complete prostration, for some hours. I foresee, in spite of the penalties which it exacts from me, that I shall have to return to the opium for the hundredth time. If I had only myself to think of, I should prefer the sharp pains to the frightful dreams. But the physical suffering exhausts me. If I let myself sink, it may end in my becoming useless to Mr. Blake at the time when he wants me most.

It was nearly one o'clock, before I could get to the hotel to-day. The visit, even in my shattered condition, proved to be a most amusing one—thanks entirely to the presence on the scene of Gabriel Betteredge.

I found him in the room, when I went in. He withdrew to the window and looked out, while I put my first customary question to my patient. Mr. Blake had slept badly again, and he felt the loss of rest this morning more than he had felt it yet.

I asked next if he had heard from Mr. Bruff.

A letter had reached him that morning. Mr. Bruff expressed the strongest disapproval of the course which his friend and client was taking under my advice. It was mischievous—for it excited hopes that might never be realised. It was quite unintelligible to *his* mind, except that it looked like a piece of trickery, akin to the trickery of mesmerism, clairvoyance, and the like. It unsettled Miss Verinder's house, and it would end in unsettling Miss Verinder herself. He had put the case (without mentioning names) to an eminent physician; and the eminent physician had smiled, had shaken his head, and had said—nothing. On these grounds, Mr. Bruff entered his protest, and left it there.

My next inquiry related to the subject of the Diamond. Had the lawyer produced any evidence to prove that the jewel was in London?

No, the lawyer had simply declined to discuss the question. He was himself satisfied that the Moonstone had been pledged to Mr. Luker. His eminent absent friend, Mr. Murthwaite (whose consummate knowledge of the Indian character no one could deny), was satisfied also. Under these circumstances, and with the many demands already made on him, he must decline entering into any disputes on the subject of evidence. Time would show; and Mr. Bruff was willing to wait for time.

It was quite plain—even if Mr. Blake had not made it plainer still by reporting the substance of the letter, instead of reading what was actually written—that distrust of *me* was at the bottom of all this. Having myself foreseen that result, I was neither mortified nor surprised. I asked Mr. Blake if his friend's protest had shaken him. He answered emphatically, that it had not produced the slightest effect on his mind. I was free after that to dismiss Mr. Bruff from consideration—and I did dismiss him, accordingly.

A pause in the talk between us, followed—and Gabriel Betteredge came out from his retirement at the window.

"Can you favour me with your attention, sir?" he inquired, addressing himself to me.

"I am quite at your service," I answered.

Betteredge took a chair and seated himself at the table. He produced a huge old-fashioned leather pocket-book, with a pencil of dimensions to match. Having put on his spectacles, he opened the pocket-book, at a blank page, and addressed himself to me once more.

"I have lived," said Betteredge, looking at me sternly, "nigh on fifty years in the service of my late lady. I was page-boy before that, in the service of the old lord, her father. I am now somewhere between seventy and eighty years of age—never mind exactly where! I am reckoned to have got as pretty a knowledge and experience of the world as most men. And what does it all end in? It ends, Mr. Ezra Jennings, in a conjuring trick being performed on Mr. Franklin Blake, by a doctor's assistant with a bottle of laudanum—and by the living jingo, I'm appointed, in my old age, to be conjuror's boy!"

Mr. Blake burst out laughing. I attempted to speak. Betteredge held up his hand, in token that he had not done yet.

"Not a word, Mr. Jennings!" he said. "It don't want a word, sir, from you. I have got my principles, thank God. If an order comes to me, which is own brother to an order come from Bedlam, it don't matter. So long as I get it from my master or mistress, as the case may be, I obey it. I may have my own opinion, which is also, you will please to remember the opinion of Mr. Bruff—the Great Mr. Bruff!"

said Betteredge, raising his voice, and shaking his head at me solemnly. "It don't matter; I withdraw my opinion, for all that. My young lady says, 'Do it.' And I say, 'Miss, it shall be done.' Here I am, with my book and my pencil—the latter not pointed so well as I could wish, but when Christians take leave of their senses, who is to expect that pencils will keep their points? Give me your orders, Mr. Jennings. I'll have them in writing, sir. I'm determined not to be behind 'em, or before 'em, by so much as a hairsbreadth. I'm a blind agent—that's what I am. A blind agent!" repeated Betteredge, with infinite relish of his own description of himself.

"I am very sorry," I began, "that you and I don't agree——"

"Don't bring *me*, into it!" interposed Betteredge. "This is not a matter of agreement, it's a matter of obedience. Issue your directions, sir—issue your directions!"

Mr. Blake made me a sign to take him at his word. I "issued my directions" as plainly and as gravely as I could.

"I wish certain parts of the house to be reopened," I said, "and to be furnished, exactly as they were furnished at this time last year."

Betteredge gave his imperfectly-pointed pencil a preliminary lick with his tongue. "Name the parts, Mr. Jennings!" he said loftily.

"First, the inner hall, leading to the chief staircase."

"'First, the inner hall,' Betteredge wrote. "Impossible to furnish that, sir, as it was furnished last year—to begin with."

"Why?"

"Because there was a stuffed buzzard, Mr. Jennings, in the hall last year. When the family left, the buzzard was put away with the other things. When the buzzard was put away—he burst."

"We will except the buzzard then."

Betteredge took a note of the exception. "'The inner hall to be furnished again, as furnished last year. A burst buzzard alone excepted.' Please to go on, Mr. Jennings."

"The carpet to be laid down on the stairs, as before."

"'The carpet to be laid down on the stairs, as before.' Sorry to disappoint you, sir. But that can't be done either."

"Why not?"

"Because the man who laid that carpet down, is dead, Mr. Jennings—and the like of him for reconciling together a carpet and a corner, is not to be found in all England, look where you may."

"Very well. We must try the next best man in England."

Betteredge took another note; and I went on issuing my directions.

"Miss Verinder's sitting-room to be restored exactly to what it was last year. Also, the corridor leading from the sitting-room to the first landing. Also, the second corridor, leading from the second landing to the best bedrooms. Also, the bedroom occupied last June by Mr. Franklin Blake."

Betteredge's blunt pencil followed me conscientiously, word by word. "Go on, sir," he said, with sardonic gravity. "There's a deal of writing left in the point of this pencil yet."

I told him that I had no more directions to give. "Sir," said Betteredge, "in that case, I have a point or two to put on my own behalf." He opened the pocket-book at a new page, and gave the inexhaustible pencil another preliminary lick.

"I wish to know," he began, "whether I may, or may not, wash my hands——"

"You may decidedly," said Mr. Blake. "I'll ring for the waiter."

"—— of certain responsibilities," pursued Betteredge, impenetrably declining to see anybody in the room but himself and me. "As to Miss Verinder's sitting-room, to begin with. When we took up the carpet last year, Mr. Jennings, we found a surprising quantity of pins. Am I responsible for putting back the pins?"

"Certainly not."

Betteredge made a note of that concession, on the spot.

"As to the first corridor next," he resumed. "When we moved the ornaments in that part, we moved a statue of a fat naked child—profanely described in the catalogue of the house as 'Cupid, god of Love.' He had two wings last year, in the fleshy part of his shoulders. My eye being off him, for the moment, he lost one of them. Am I responsible for Cupid's wing?"

I made another concession, and Betteredge made another note.

"As to the second corridor," he went on. "There having been nothing in it, last year, but the doors of the rooms (to everyone of which I can swear, if necessary), my mind is easy, I admit, respecting that part of the house only. But, as to Mr. Franklin's bedroom (if *that* is to be put back to what it was before), I want to know who is responsible for keeping it in a perpetual state of litter, no matter how often it may be set right—his trousers here, his towels there, and his French novels everywhere—I say, who is responsible for untidying the tidiness of Mr. Franklin's room, him or me?"

Mr. Blake declared that he would assume the whole responsibility with the greatest pleasure. Betteredge obstinately declined to listen to any solution of the difficulty, without first referring it to my sanction and approval. I accepted Mr. Blake's proposal; and Betteredge made a last entry in the pocket-book to that effect.

"Look in when you like, Mr. Jennings, beginning from to-morrow," he said, getting on his legs. "You will find me at work, with the necessary persons to assist me. I respectfully beg to thank you, sir, for overlooking the case of the stuffed buzzard, and the other case of the Cupid's wing—as also for permitting me to wash

my hands of all responsibility in respect of the pins on the carpet, and the litter in Mr. Franklin's room. Speaking as a servant, I am deeply indebted to you. Speaking as a man, I consider you to be a person whose head is full of maggots, and I take up my testimony against your experiment as a delusion and a snare. Don't be afraid, on that account, of my feelings as a man getting in the way of my duty as a servant! You shall be obeyed — the maggots notwithstanding, sir, you shall be obeyed. If it ends in your setting the house on fire, Damme if I send for the engines, unless you ring the bell and order them first!"

With that farewell assurance, he made me a bow, and walked out of the room.

"Do you think we can depend on him?" I asked.

"Implicitly," answered Mr. Blake. "When we go to the house, we shall find nothing neglected, and nothing forgotten."

June 19th. — Another protest against our contemplated proceedings! From a lady this time.

The morning's post brought me two letters. One, from Miss Verinder, consenting, in the kindest manner, to the arrangement that I have proposed. The other from the lady under whose care she is living—one Mrs. Merridew.

Mrs. Merridew presents her compliments, and does not pretend to understand the subject on which I have been corresponding with Miss Verinder, in its scientific bearings. Viewed in its social bearings, however, she feels free to pronounce an opinion. I am probably, Mrs. Merridew thinks, not aware that Miss Verinder is barely nineteen years of age. To allow a young lady, at her time of life, to be present (without a "chaperone") in a house full of men among whom a medical experiment is being carried on, is an outrage on propriety which Mrs. Merridew cannot possibly permit. If the matter is allowed to proceed, she will feel it to be her duty—at a serious sacrifice of her own personal convenience — to accompany Miss Verinder to Yorkshire. Under these circumstances, she ventures to request that I will kindly reconsider the subject; seeing that Miss Verinder declines to be guided by any opinion but mine. Her presence cannot possibly be necessary; and a word from me, to that effect, would relieve both Mrs. Merridew and myself of a very unpleasant responsibility.

Translated from polite commonplace, into plain English, the meaning of this is, as I take it, that Mrs. Merridew stands in mortal fear of the opinion of the world. She has unfortunately appealed to the very last man in existence who has any reason to regard that opinion with respect. I won't disappoint Miss Verinder; and I won't delay a reconciliation between two young people who love each other, and who have been parted too long already. Translated from plain English into polite commonplace, this means that Mr. Jennings presents his compliments to Mrs. Merridew, and regrets that he cannot feel justified in interfering any farther in the matter.

Mr. Blake's report of himself, this morning, was the same as before. We determined not to disturb Betteredge by overlooking him at the house to-day. To-morrow will be time enough for our first visit of inspection.

June 20th.—Mr. Blake is beginning to feel his continued restlessness at night. The sooner the rooms are refurnished, now, the better.

On our way to the house, this morning, he consulted me, with some nervous impatience and irresolution, about a letter (forwarded to him from London) which he had received from Sergeant Cuff.

The Sergeant writes from Ireland. He acknowledges the receipt (through his housekeeper) of a card and message which Mr. Blake left at his residence near Dorking, and announces his return to England as likely to take place in a week or less. In the meantime, he requests to be favoured with Mr. Blake's reasons for wishing to speak to him (as stated in the message) on the subject of the Moonstone. If Mr. Blake can convict him of having made any serious mistake, in the course of his last year's inquiry concerning the Diamond, he will consider it a duty (after the liberal manner in which he was treated by the late Lady Verinder) to place himself at that gentleman's disposal. If not, he begs permission to remain in his retirement, surrounded by the peaceful floricultural attractions of a country life.

After reading the letter, I had no hesitation in advising Mr. Blake to inform Sergeant Cuff, in reply, of all that had happened since the inquiry was suspended last year, and to leave him to draw his own conclusions from the plain facts.

On second thoughts, I also suggested inviting the Sergeant to be present at the experiment, in the event of his returning to England in time to join us. He would be a valuable witness to have, in any case; and, if I proved to be wrong in believing the Diamond to be hidden in Mr. Blake's room, his advice might be of great importance, at a future stage of the proceedings over which I could exercise no control. This last consideration appeared to decide Mr. Blake. He promised to follow my advice.

The sound of the hammer informed us that the work of refurnishing was in full progress, as we entered the drive that led to the house.

Betteredge, attired for the occasion in a fisherman's red cap, and an apron of green baize, met us in the outer hall. The moment he saw me, he pulled out the pocket-book and pencil, and obstinately insisted on taking notes of everything that I said to him. Look where we might, we found, as Mr. Blake had foretold, that the work was advancing as rapidly and as intelligently as it was possible to desire. But there was still much to be done in the inner hall, and in Miss Verinder's room. It seemed doubtful whether the house would be ready for us before the end of the week.

Having congratulated Betteredge on the progress that he had made (he persisted in taking notes, every time I opened my lips; declining, at the same time, to pay the slightest attention to anything said by Mr. Blake); and having promised to return for a second visit of inspection in a day or two, we prepared to leave the house, going out by the back way. Before we were clear of the passages down-stairs, I was stopped by Betteredge, just as I was passing the door which led into his own room.

"Could I say two words to you in private?" he asked, in a mysterious whisper.

I consented of course. Mr. Blake walked on to wait for me in the garden, while I accompanied Betteredge into his room. I fully anticipated a demand for certain new concessions, following the precedent already established in the cases of the stuffed buzzard, and the Cupid's wing. To my great surprise, Betteredge laid his hand confidentially on my arm, and put this extraordinary question to me:

"Mr. Jennings, do you happen to be acquainted with Robinson Crusoe?"

I answered that I had read Robinson Crusoe when I was a child.

"Not since then?" inquired Betteredge.

"Not since then."

He fell back a few steps, and looked at me with an expression of compassionate curiosity, tempered by superstitious awe.

"He has not read Robinson Crusoe since he was a child," said Betteredge, speaking to himself—not to me. "Let's try how Robinson Crusoe strikes him now!"

He unlocked a cupboard in a corner, and produced a dirty and dog's-eared book, which exhaled a strong odour of stale tobacco as he turned over the leaves. Having found a passage of which he was apparently in search, he requested me to join him in the corner; still mysteriously confidential, and still speaking under his breath.

"In respect to this hocus-pocus of yours, sir, with the laudanum and Mr. Franklin Blake," he began. "While the workpeople are in the house, my duty as a servant gets the better of my feelings as a man. When the workpeople are gone, my feelings as a man get the better of my duty as a servant. Very good. Last night, Mr. Jennings, it was borne in powerfully on my mind that this new medical enterprise of yours would end badly. If I had yielded to that secret Dictate, I should have put all the furniture away again with my own hands, and have warned the workmen off the premises when they came the next morning."

"I am glad to find, from what I have seen up-stairs," I said, "that you resisted the secret Dictate."

"Resisted isn't the word," answered Betteredge. "Wrostled is the word. I wrostled, sir, between the silent orders in my bosom pulling me one way, and the written orders in my pocket-book pushing me the other, until (saving your presence) I was in a cold sweat. In that dreadful perturbation of mind and laxity of body, to what remedy did I apply? To the remedy, sir, which has never failed me yet for the last thirty years and more—to This Book!"

He hit the book a sounding blow with his open hand, and struck out of it a stronger smell of stale tobacco than ever.

"What did I find here," pursued Betteredge, "at the first page I opened? This awful bit, sir, page one hundred and seventy-eight, as follows:—'Upon these, and many like Reflections, I afterwards made it a certain rule with me, That whenever I found those secret Hints or Pressings of my Mind, to doing, or not doing any Thing that presented; or to going, this Way, or that Way, I never failed to obey the secret Dictate.'—As I live by bread, Mr. Jennings, those were the first words that met my eye, exactly at the time when I myself was setting the secret Dictate at defiance! You don't see anything at all out of the common in that, do you, sir?"

"I see a coincidence—nothing more."

"You don't feel at all shaken, Mr. Jennings, in respect to this medical enterprise of yours?"

"Not the least in the world."

Betteredge stared hard at me, in dead silence. He closed the book with great deliberation; he locked it up again in the cupboard with extraordinary care; he wheeled round, and stared hard at me once more. Then he spoke.

"Sir," he said gravely, "there are great allowances to be made for a man who has not read Robinson Crusoe, since he was a child. I wish you good morning.

He opened his door with a low bow, and left me at liberty to find my own way into the garden. I met Mr. Blake returning to the house.

"You needn't tell me what has happened," he said. "Betteredge has played his last card: he has made another prophetic discovery in Robinson Crusoe. Have you humoured his favourite delusion? No? You have let him see that you don't believe in Robinson Crusoe? Mr. Jennings! you have fallen to the lowest possible place in Betteredge's estimation. Say what you like, and do what you like, for the future. You will find that he won't waste another word on you now."

June 21st.—A short entry must suffice in my journal to-day.

Mr. Blake has had the worst night that he has passed yet. I have been obliged, greatly against my will, to prescribe for him. Men of his sensitive organisation are fortunately quick in feeling the effect of remedial measures. Otherwise, I should be inclined to fear that he will be totally unfit for the experiment, when the time comes to try it.

As for myself, after some little remission of my pains for the last two days, I had an attack this morning, of which I shall say nothing but that it has decided me to return to the opium.

I shall close this book, and take my full dose—five hundred drops.

June 22nd.—Our prospects look better to-day. Mr. Blake's nervous suffering is greatly allayed. He slept a little last night. *My* night, thanks to the opium, was the night of a man who is stunned. I can't say that I woke this morning; the fitter expression would be, that I recovered my senses.

We drove to the house to see if the refurnishing was done. It will be completed to-morrow—Saturday. As Mr. Blake foretold, Betteredge raised no further obstacles. From first to last, he was ominously polite, and ominously silent.

My medical enterprise (as Betteredge calls it) must now, inevitably, be delayed until Monday next. To-morrow evening, the workmen will be late in the house. On the next day, the established Sunday tyranny which is one of the institutions of this free country, so times the trains as to make it impossible to ask anybody to travel to us from London. Until Monday comes, there is nothing to be done but to watch Mr. Blake carefully, and to keep him, if possible, in the same state in which I find him to-day.

In the meanwhile, I have prevailed on him to write to Mr. Bruff, making a point of it that he shall be present as one of the witnesses. I especially choose the lawyer, because he is strongly prejudiced against us. If we convince *him*, we place our victory beyond the possibility of dispute.

Mr. Blake has also written to Sergeant Cuff: and I have sent a line to Miss Verinder. With these, and with old Betteredge (who is really a person of importance in the family) we shall have witnesses enough for the purpose—without including Mrs. Merridew, if Mrs. Merridew persists in sacrificing herself to the opinion of the world.

June 23rd.—The vengeance of the opium overtook me again last night. No matter; I must go on with it now till Monday is past and gone.

Mr. Blake is not so well again to-day. At two this morning, he confesses that he opened the drawer in which his cigars are put away. He only succeeded in locking it up again by a violent effort. His next proceeding, in case of accident, was to throw the key out of window. The waiter brought it in this morning, discovered at the bottom of an empty cistern—such is Fate! I have taken possession of the key, until Tuesday next.

June 24th.—Mr. Blake and I took a long drive in an open carriage. We both felt beneficially the blessed influence of the soft summer air. I dined with him at the hotel. To my great relief—for I found him in an over-wrought, over-excited state, this morning—he had two hours' sound sleep on the sofa after dinner. If he has another bad night, now—I am not afraid of the consequences.

June 25th, Monday.—The day of the experiment! It is five o'clock in the afternoon. We have just arrived at the house.

LEAVES FROM THE MAHOGANY TREE.

A SLICE OFF THE JOINT.

Homer is a great authority on the question how the Greeks of the heroic ages cooked their meat. May we, therefore, be pardoned if we stop on the threshold of our article to make a remark or two about the probable profession of "blind old Mæonides," before we proceed to prove the poet's truly English predilection for roast beef?

We have been recently informed, by our wide-read and energetic friend Dreikopf, that the learned world of Germany has, for the last fifteen years, been literally torn to pieces by a tremendous and apparently inexhaustible controversy on this question carried on between the sagacious Bopp of Jena, and the erudite Klopp of Heidelberg. No old scholar or young student but has taken his beer-glass in one hand and his Homer in the other, and ranged himself under the flaunting flag of Klopp, or the blustering banner of Bopp. The light of Jena contends, on the one part, that Homer was a carcass-butcher at Chios; while the luminary of Heidelberg argues, with equal virulence, that the blind harper was a house-surgeon at Smyrna.

A good deal of outward courtesy has hitherto been maintained by both disputants; but in secret, Dreikopf, who has visited both camps as a strict neutral, confesses to us that there exists much bitterness of feeling and less restraint of temper than might have been expected between two such great scholars.

Bopp says to his students, "How can this fool, this Bœotian ox, deny that Homer never speaks of the cutting up of meat without showing a gusto, taste, and knowledge, unobtainable by any one unless he had been a practical butcher? Let the atrocious ass refer, if he choose, to the Ninth Iliad, verse 270. The ninnyhammer will there see that when a Greek deputation is sent to Achilles to try and win him back to the allied army, Patroclus takes three chines (pig, sheep, and goat), and transfixes and divides them with a discriminating skill worthy of any flesh-market. Let the swollen bull-frog of Heidelberg dulness also turn, if he can read pure Greek well enough, to the First Iliad, verse 600, where he will find the Greeks who sacrifice the hecatomb to appease Apollo, severing the thighs of the oxen and wrapping choice morsels for the gods in the double caul."

Such are a few of Bopp's learned arguments, and Bopp is very convincing indeed until you hear Klopp. That star of Heidelberg talks most irreverently of his adversary. "Culmination of pedantry!" he sometimes says, as if Bopp were actually present in the lecture-room. "How can he talk to me of butchers and such plebeian vul-

garity, when he sees that in his battles Homer always wounds his heroes in the most learned and anatomical way? Storm and weather! Are we to be dictated to by these old jackdaws of Jena, who think that the church belongs to them because they chatter on the weathercock? Does not Homer, in the Thirteenth Iliad, verse 812, make Merion slay Harpalion the Paphlagonian by a thrust under the hip bone and through the bladder? Does he not (idiot) represent Thoas killed by Antilochus (accomplished blockhead) by a javelin that cuts the hollow vein that extends to the neck along the chine? And again I ask (wooden brains) does not King Hypenor fall, in the Thirteenth Iliad (five hundred and twentieth verse) pierced through his liver? Endless, indeed, are the ways in which this divine medical man inflicts death on the dummies or minor personages of his great poem." So far Klopp, who is irrefutable till you hear Bopp. But, indeed, though there is more acuteness about Klopp, there is more grasp about Bopp. If Klopp be more vigorous, Bopp is more refined. Klopp is the luxuriant summer meadow, Bopp the rolled velvet lawn. If Bopp steal on with his fertilising stream, silent and unobserved as the subterranean New River, Klopp rolls on, broad, open, and generous as the Thames, but, like that river, stained here and there by the dead dog of prejudice and the floating cat of professional envy. If Bopp rise like a skyrocket, Klopp remains longer in the air. If Bopp blaze brighter and more like the violent Vesuvian, Klopp, like the wax candle of society, burns longer and clearer. Bopp's theories astonish, but Klopp's are read with perpetual delight. In fact, whether Klopp has beaten Bopp, or Bopp has pounded Klopp, it will take many centuries and many hogsheads of ink to settle.

Madame Dacier (that learned lady of Languedoc, who translated Iliad and Odyssey), was of opinion that there was no allusion in Homer to any way of cooking except roasting! From this some critics as hasty as Madame have argued that at the time of the siege of Troy the Greeks had no fire-proof vessels. In the Ninth Iliad, however, where Achilles feasts his unbidden guests, Homer especially says that Patroclus put by mutton and goat's flesh to roast and boil, while a fat shoulder of pork was being got ready for the spit; or, as old Chapman rhymes it, in his grand, rumbling, rough way:

> Automedon held, while he pieces cut,
> To roast and boil, right cunningly; then of a well-fed swine,
> A huge fat shoulder he cuts out and spits it wondrous fine.

Another piece of evidence which shows that the Homeric Greeks boiled meat, is, that in the Odyssey, one of the insolent suitors flings the foot of an ox at Ulysses, whom he takes for a beggar on the tramp. Now, no people would ever have served up a roast leg of beef to table; or if they had, would they have left the hoof on? Whereas, boiled cow heel is dainty, gelatinous, and nutritious. Madame Dacier's arguments are untenable; and we hereby (without arrogance) consign them for ever to the limbo of vanities.

It is the joint, the pièce de resistance, that constitutes the special difference between English and French cooking. The barbaric lumps of meat, such as the Norsemen carved with their walruss-horn-handled daggers, are the incarnations of discord which we and the French have long fought over. Ever since Mary de Medici's courtiers brought Italian cooking and the refinement of side dishes into France, the joint has been disregarded on the other side of the Channel. There are some bitter people, indeed, who say that the French are obliged to cook better than we do, and that the Frenchwomen are obliged to dress better; because their meat is so bad, and because their women are ugly. The less beauty, the more dress—the worse the meat, the more need of sauce. But this remark is grossly unfair, for the French beef, though not so exquisitely marbled as our own, nor so fat or tender, is often of good quality; and as for Frenchwomen, though we can scarcely be expected to allow them to be so beautiful as the English, they are so pleasing and so agreeable that they need no extraneous advantages, and could afford to despise the very cestus of Venus. But, there is no doubt, that however much the tastes of the two nations may once have harmonised, the tendency in England is to the one simple dish, and in France to a variety of savoury delicacies, often quite as pleasant and digestible as the solid slices of meat that the poorer Englishman affects.

The simplicity of taste (or the barbarity, which shall we call it?) must be inherent in our nature: it assuredly is not a question of quantity, for most Frenchmen eat more than most Englishmen.

It has been well said that a Frenchwoman is always cooking, while an Englishwoman leaves off her preparations for a meal till the last possible moment, and then hurries the roasting and gallops the boiling. Hence, arise failure and indigestion. Still this incontrovertible fact remains, that spite of all cooking you cannot in Paris get a rumpsteak that approaches the steak of a good London tavern. Ask for a "bifstek" in the Palais Royal par exemple, and François, or Pierre, will bring you a little lump of beef of a pleasant savoury brown colour, a little crimsoned, embedded in crisp shavings of baked potatoes. You know that the white capped chef has longed to anoint it with sauce Robert, Sorel, Sharp, or Tomato, to remove its barbarous simplicity. It eats well and tender, but a little tasteless, and it is without much natural fat of its own, the Norman beast being of the lean kine genus, and by no means a bull of Bashan; you eat, and as you eat patiently, you ruminate on the past life of the unknown animal, part of which you are devouring. But a London steak is a far different thing; it is thicker, fatter, juicier, and of a rarer merit; it has been beaten worse than any Christian galley slave by the Turks,

and has been broiled with a learned and almost unerring instinct. It requires no effort of digestion, it melts in the mouth like a peach, passes at once into the blood, and goes straight to recruit the heart. It is a sort of meat fruit, and merely requires the soft pressure of the lips. Broiling, to tell the truth however, requires no common mind. To broil, is to perform an operation which is the result of centuries of experience acquired by a nation that relishes, always did relish, and probably always will relish, broils. It requires cleanliness, watchfulness, patience, profound knowledge of great chemical laws, a quick eye, and a swift hand. The Homeric heroes are supposed to have lived on broils, and this branch of cooking is deserving of the utmost respect.

A young cook should be always informed that it takes years to learn how to broil a rump steak; for a thousand impish difficulties surround the broiler, and do their worst to spoil the dainty morsel, and prevent its reaching the expectant jaws. If the gridiron be not bright as silver, and clean between the bars, the meat will suffer. If the bars be not rubbed with suet they will print themselves on the steak. If the fire be not bright and clear, there is no hope for the broiler. If the broil be hurried, it will be smoked or burnt. If the gridiron be overheated before the steak is put on it, it will scorch the steak. If the gridiron be cold, the part of the meat covered by the bars will be underdone. If the gridiron be not kept slanting, the constant flare and smoke, from the fat streaming into the fire, will spoil the steak. If no salt be sprinkled on the fire, the meat will very likely taste of brimstone, which the salt should exorcise.

Few people seem to know that rump steaks are not at their best, except from October to April. It is only in the colder months that they can be taken from meat hung at least four days to make it tender. When fresh they are mere fibrous masses of unconquerable gristly fibre. A good steak often turned to prevent burning, and to keep the gravy at the centre, takes ten minutes to broil. It should be eaten with a table-spoonful of warmed catsup, and a little finely minced shalot.

Mutton, says the eccentric Dr. Kitchener, requires a brisk fierce fire, quick and clear; but beef, a large sound one. To judge from Robert May's Accomplisht Cook (1665), written five years after the Restoration by a man who had been apprenticed to the chefs at the Grocers' Hall and Star Chamber, and had afterwards officiated in Lady Dormer's kitchen, bastings and dredgings were thought of supreme importance in the reign of Charles the Second. May enumerates seven forms of dredgings, and six of bastings, some, perhaps, worthy of preservation. The dredgings are: 1. Flour mixed with grated bread; 2. Sweet herbs dried and powdered, mixed with bread-crumbs; 3. Lemon-peel pounded, or orange-peel mixed with flour; 4. Powdered sugar mixed with pounded cinnamon, flour, or grated bread; 5. Fennel seeds, coriander, cinnamon, and sugar finely beaten, and mixed with grated bread or flour; 6. For young pigs, grated bread or flour mixed with beaten nutmeg, ginger, pepper, sugar, and yolks of eggs; 7. Sugar, bread, and salt mixed. For bastings: 1. Fresh butter; 2. Chopped suet; 3. Minced sweet herbs, butter, and claret (especially for mutton and lamb); 4. Water and salt. 5. Cream and melted butter (especially for flayed pig); 6. Yolks of eggs, grated biscuit, and juice of oranges.

The old rule of roasting and boiling is about twenty minutes to the pound; fifteen minutes is scarcely enough, especially in cold weather, in a draughty kitchen, or at a slack fire. The fire for roasting should burn up gradually, and not attain its full power until the joint is approaching perfection. Boiled meat cannot boil too slowly. Boiling wastes less of the meat than roasting. Beef, by boiling, loses twenty-six and a half per cent; by baking, thirty; by roasting, thirty-two per cent; boiling is also, though less savoury, a more economical way of cooking, as the water used receives the gelatine of the meat and makes an excellent basis for soup, which it is mad extravagance to throw away. The charm of a roast joint is the beautiful pale-brown colour. The sign of a roast joint being thoroughly done (saturated with heat) is when the steam rising from it draws towards the fire.

In the old cocked-hat times, when an inn kitchen was the traveller's sweetest refuge, and the sight of the odorous joint revolving majestically on the spit was one of the most refreshing of landscapes—in those distant ages, when the postilion's whip sounded frequently at the inn door, and the creaking of the inn sign was tired nature's most grateful lullaby—the red-faced choleric cook made great to-do with her steel spits and pewter plates. Those were hard times for the kitchen wenches, the scullions, and the turnspit dogs, the latter of whom used often to hide when they saw the meat arrive at the kitchen door. The jack had to be scoured, oiled, wiped, and kept covered up. It was in those days that Swift, in his droll bitter way, advised the cook to carefully leave the winders on whilst the jack was going round, in order that they might fly off and knock out the brains of half a dozen of those idle, thievish, chattering footmen who were always clustering round the dripping-pan.

It was Swift who also enriched our literature with a rhyming recipe to roast mutton. It is a pleasant banter on the stultifying love verses and pastoral songs of Queen Anne's time:

Gently stir and blow the fire,
  Lay the mutton down to roast,
Dress it quickly, I desire,
  In the dripping put a toast
That I hunger may remove—
Mutton is the meat I love.

On the dresser see it lie,
  Oh! the charming white and red,
Finer meat ne'er met the eye,
  On the sweetest grass it fed.

Let the jack go swiftly round,
Let me have it nicely brown'd.

On the table spread the cloth,
Let the knives be sharp and clean,
Pickles get and salad both,
Let them each be fresh and green;
Now small beer, good ale and wine,
O ye gods, how I shall dine!

Mr. Gay the poet—that plump good-natured man whom everybody loved—also tried his hand at the same branch of literature. He sent some portly, clerical, not unappreciative, friend of his, this recipe to stew a knuckle of veal:

Take a knuckle of veal,
You may buy it or steal,
In a few pieces cut it,
In a stewing-pan put it;
Salt, pepper, and mace
Must season this knuckle.
Then what's joined to a place (salary)
With other herbs muckle
That which killed King Will (Sorrel, his horse),
And what never stands still (time),
Which much you will mend if
Both spinage and endive
And lettuce and beet
With marygold meet.
Put no water at all,
For it maketh things small,
Which, lest it should happen,
A close cover clap on,
Put this pot of Wood's metal
In a boiling hot kettle,
And there let it be
(Mark the doctrine I teach)
About—let me see—
Thrice as long as you preach;
And skimming the fat off,
Say grace with your hat off,
Oh, then with what rapture
Will it fill dean and chapter!

Both these sets of verse probably, (certainly the latter) were written to friends, and have all the careless freshness and ease that might be expected. Mr. Sydney Smith wrote a recipe for a winter salad, which is a highly finished piece of Popian verse. It begins:

Two large potatoes passed through kitchen sieve
Unwonted softness to the salad give.

It contains some weak lines, and some which are exquisitely worded.

These are two of the best:

Let onion atoms lurk within the bowl,
And, scarce suspected, animate the whole.

And it ends with a verse of admirable and heroic grandiloquence:

Serenely full the epicure may say,
Fate cannot harm me, I have dined to-day.

It has been often disputed whether a continued diet of beef or of mutton would soonest grow intolerable. We give our black ball with the firmness of an ancient Roman, against beef. The more mannered a meat is, the sooner it grows wearisome. Do we not all remember how the old indentures of Newcastle apprentices always contained a clause limiting the number of salmon dinners? The poor lads would have pined away upon a delicacy that never changed. But in spite of this fact, Eton boys, who are very injudiciously fed too often on mutton, always delight in that meat in after life, which seems to us a proof of its untiring savour and gusto. Mutton, Ude says, is more frequently served at dinner than any other dish, not that it is half as fine flavoured as kid or fawn, but then it is our adopted meat, and can be so easily disguised and transformed. The most imperial way of serving up lamb for a very great dinner, where a central and lordly dish is required, is thus given, and under a most quaint title, by Lord Sefton's chef. "A ROAST BEEF OF LAMB!" he styleth it. "Take the saddle and the two legs of a lamb, cut out of the middle of each leg a small rosette, which is to be larded, as also the fillets. Roast the whole, and glaze the larded parts of a good colour. Serve up with gravy (mint sauce in a boat), or in the French manner, with maître d'hôtel sauce—i.e. béchamel sauce, fresh butter, parsley, salt, pepper, and lemon-juice."

And now with all the promptitude of our nature, to a financial question. Does the price of meat, as charged to a diner at a London eating-house, bear any faint relation to the original cost price of the joint? We determined to benefit the world by an experiment that would at once settle this question. We directed our cook to buy a sirloin of beef weighing eight pounds: cost, at tenpence a pound, six shillings and eightpence. This was cooked. When it was cold we set to work, and, in the true spirit of the philanthropist, cut it into what in dining-rooms they call "plates." We found that it cut into eighteen fair plates, which (if the tavern-keeper did not get the beef cheaper than we did) would yield a profit of two shillings and fourpence only—a far less profit, we confess, than we had expected.

As we have in our comparison of beef and mutton perhaps rather run down our ancient and truly English friend beef, and elevated mutton at its expense, let us make the amende honorable by a final fact which redounds to the credit of the national dish. The late Duke of Norfolk used seldom to eat less than three or four steaks at the club over which he often presided. The great man always used to assert that every steak had a physiognomy of its own; and that although the club dinners always consisted of steaks, yet that no dinner ever quite resembled its predecessor. One night, the ox was from some special county; another night, the cook was in good humour, and excelled himself; a third time, the meat had been kept to the very hour, and was done to the very turn. He also considered that in the middle of the rump "there lurked a fifth essence, the perfect ideal of tenderness and flavour." For this he always tarried and recruited his forces, fortified by his second bottle of port. It was reported by the scandalous that the duke always preceded these dinners at the "Steaks" by a secret preliminary dish of fish. They say it was a grand sight to

see the rosy duke (his orange-coloured ribbon and silver gridiron, not yet assumed) listening to one of Captain Morris's sparkling Bacchanalian songs, rubbing meantime a clean plate with a fragrant shalot, preparatory to his third steak, in front of the gridiron-grating through which the cooks were seen at work behind that portcullis: over which was inscribed the apt quotation from Macbeth,

> If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
> It were done quickly.

POOR RELIEF IN AUSTRALIA.

In providing for our poor, we in Australia have the advantage of being without tradition. We have no venerable schemes to abandon, no rare old abuses to get rid of. Beadledom is unknown. We therefore start fair. But in this land of gold and plenty, where we buy a leg of mutton or a dozen of peaches for a shilling, can there be poverty? Well, yes. The poor are still in our land. Doubtless all classes of labourers are much better off than at home; we always call England home. But there is poverty, and that, too, to some considerable extent. In the unsettled state of our population, men change continually their places of abode. So it happens that careless husbands leave their wives and families without means of support. Again, in our mining districts accidents are of far too frequent occurrence. In many different ways the bread-winner is suddenly cut down. Moreover, even in this splendid climate men and women do grow old, and, from some cause or other, have made no provision for declining years. They, too, must be supported. Lastly, there is drunkenness, which here, as everywhere, adds not a few to the list of those who receive charitable aid. In the great metropolitan goldfield, Ballarat and surrounding district, out of a population of a little over sixty thousand, some seven hundred per week receive aid from a public institution.

What that public institution is, and how it does its work, we propose now to tell.

Poorhouse or workhouse are still names unknown in Australia. Our institution is called The Benevolent Asylum, and every true Australian prays that the time may never come when our children shall forget the sacred claims of charity, and put their trust in poor laws and workhouses.

Before relief can be given, the wherewithal must of necessity first be got. We have no poor rates. How, then, is money obtained? Last year the public gave us in subscriptions two thousand one hundred and eighty-two pounds, and the government supplemented it by a grant of four thousand pounds, so that we have an income of six thousand one hundred and eighty-two pounds, besides payment from government for deserted children and other items, making altogether about eight thousand pounds. Money being provided, the next question is, who is to spend it? Every year a president, treasurer, and committee of sixteen gentlemen, are selected by and out of the subscribers of one pound a year or upward. This is the staff of managers, and the whole power is placed in their hands. They are unpaid, and conduct the rather laborious business of the institution as a work of love. Our building stands in a reserve of about six acres; it is built in the Elizabethan style, and has cost about sixteen thousand pounds. There is accommodation for nearly three hundred inmates.

Let us go over it. We enter a spacious waiting-hall. To the left are apartments for women and children, master and matron's rooms, kitchen, laundry, &c. The centre and right are appropriated to men, including a large sick ward. The first room we enter in the centre, is the men's dining-room: scrupulously clean, light, and pleasant. Used also for religious service. Down a passage we find the men's sitting-rooms; the older men in one; the younger in the other. That tall old man fought at Waterloo, and there, too, is one of Nelson's heroes. There are Scotchmen playing draughts, and there is a Frenchman playing a fiddle. On the table are the daily papers, several English papers, magazines, &c. A Chinaman and a New Zealander are admiring the last number of the Illustrated London News. Some are reading novels, some are discussing politics, some are simply enjoying light, air, cleanliness, and human companionship.

Sleeping wards are up-stairs. Each inmate has an iron bedstead, mattrass, blankets, and *white* counterpane. At the head of each bed is a neat wooden chest, serving as a seat and a receptacle for clothes, and other private property of the residents. Over some of the beds you may see photographs of loved but lost or far-distant friends. The master can be, and very frequently is, communicated with at all hours of the night. Go into the grounds; there we have, first, a flower-garden radiant in this autumn month of March with fuchsias, pelargoniums, geraniums, roses, dahlias, gladioli, liliums, petunias, &c. On each side are vegetable gardens with all ordinary English vegetables, magnificent vegetable marrows, cucumbers, tomatoes, &c. It is very seldom that the first prize for vegetables at the Horticultural Society's shows is not taken by the gardener to the Benevolent Asylum. His prize vegetables are consumed in soup, and are in various other ways disposed of by the inmates. Here may be seen sundry old men and others who can do a little work, earning extras in the shape of plugs of tobacco and pats of butter, by digging, weeding, or generally making themselves useful. In the centre of the vegetable garden one cannot fail to see a good-sized arbour covered with Banksia and other roses. This—oh, Mr. Bounderby, is not this turtle soup?—is the smoking-room. Old men, who have smoked all their lives, must smoke; hence, all over fifty are allowed a plug of tobacco weekly; and other tobacco may be

earned, as we have seen, by garden labour, shoemending, tailoring, or mattrass-stuffing. We have no square, high-walled, gravelled yards; we believe that even the poor may have æsthetic tastes, and if they have not, we do not see how virtue can be helped, or vice hindered, by positive bare God-hated ugliness. We fancy—mistaken in our youth, it may be—that that "contentment" which an old book tells us with "godliness is gain," is best promoted by the sight of God's fair works, and that those perhaps who have never thought of Him may begin to see him in a garden—in brick walls and spiked tops never. Besides, for those who want facts, our beautiful garden pays, and pays well. Last year our vegetables, taken at market prices, were worth one hundred and forty-nine pounds nineteen shillings and threepence, besides what fed cows and pigs, which useful animals cleared two hundred and fourteen pounds two shillings.

Cross the gardens, and you find our schoolroom and playgrounds. Our school is under the Board of Education. In Victoria we have a system of government secular education, of a first-class ordinary English character. Look at our children: plump, rosy, and decidedly jolly. At home they would be thought well-dressed children of the better sort of mechanics. They have swings, gymnasium, cricket, tops, and other such follies. As you walk through with the master, you see that the children are not afraid of him—that they bring their grievances to him with an unlimited belief both in his power and intention to see the right thing done.

Next let us pass into the quadrangle at the back. Here are the kitchen, laundry, drying-room, bath. The inmates' clothes are duly washed every week in winter, and dried by hot air; in summer with the thermometer from ninety to a hundred degrees Fahrenheit, they dry fast enough. On Saturday, shirts, socks, and the like, neatly folded, are placed in the chests before mentioned in the sleeping wards. In the bath-room there is a fine plunge; the men have the use of it twice a week; the boys, any day; and a fine sight it is to see the youngsters taking headers and swimming gloriously. Workshops for those who can do a little mattrass-making, shoemaking, or tailoring; cowhouses, pigsties, and earth-closets; complete our survey.

Returning to the house through the kitchen, we may inquire as to food. For breakfast, coffee and bread; those who have earned it, have butter. Dinner, either basin of soup and six ounces of boiled meat free from bone; or half a pound of roast meat, with vegetables when in season, one pound of bread, and potatoes at discretion. We find it better to put the potatoes and bread on the table, indeed actually cheaper, than to portion it out, for there is not so much waste; those who only eat little, only take little, and no one can say they have not enough. The meat is cut up into equal portions in the kitchen for convenience' sake. Tea as breakfast: sound tea, and not coffee. The bread is all the best wheaten, the meat first quality; which is, after all, not saying much, when our present contract is for prime beef twopence, mutton one penny three farthings per pound. Two members of committee, appointed in rotation and for a fortnight at a time, visit the asylum, inspect the stores, hear complaints if any, and see that all is as it ought to be. The master and matron have three hundred pounds per annum, with board, lighting, fire, and quarters. The work of the house is done by paid servants. We do not forget the religious and moral welfare of our poor. Free in this land from a state church, and where there is perfect religious equality, we could not appoint any chaplain, but the voluntary principle works well. Good friends of various denominations hold a Sunday school every Sunday afternoon. The inmates go to what place of worship they please, on Sunday morning; in the afternoon there is a service conducted by the Wesleyans; on Friday afternoon the Episcopalians have service; on Tuesday afternoon the ministers of most of the other denominations conduct service in turn. Attendance is optional. By way of amusement, occasional lectures; or should dissolving views, or Lancashire bell-ringers, or such like, visit the town, very frequently they come up and give an entertainment to their poor brethren.

But the sick ward must not be forgotten. Here every attention is paid to our paupers. We get those who are turned out of the hospital as incurable, besides those who fall sick in the house. Take up the doctor's book, and, for the benefit of some English poor-house, copy:

A. T., beef-tea, wine, and soft fruit daily.

S. M., ice (a luxury in Australia), eggs, and wine.

S. H., soft fruit, sago, porter.

Our doctor seems a great advocate for soft fruit, by which term, at this present, peaches, grapes, pears, apples are meant. Eighteen eggs and a bottle of wine, with sago and arrowroot, is a favourite out-door prescription. Horrid mixtures in blacking-bottles are unknown.

Who are admitted to our asylum? All who really need such a home; neither creed nor clime makes any difference. Any man or woman who can't get a living, and whose friends can't or won't support, we admit. Our object is stated to be: "To relieve the aged, infirm, disabled, and destitute, and to minister to their necessities according to the ability of the institution." The limits are simply want, on the part of the applicant; means, on the part of the asylum. Either the general or the house committee meet weekly to receive and deal with applications.

We have said nothing yet of out-door relief. Many require help who cannot be admitted into the asylum—families and so forth—and these constitute the out-door part of our work. Every Wednesday, the master serves out rations to such applicants according to the following scale for each adult: six pounds of bread or five pounds of flour, four pounds of meat or two and a half pounds of rice, a quarter of a pound of

tea, a quarter of a pound of coffee, three-quarters of a pound of sugar; for each child bread and sugar only. Any of these things can be changed for oatmeal, arrowroot, sago, and so forth, if required. Extra rations for sickness according to doctor's orders.

The town is divided into districts; to each district two members of committee are appointed, who have to visit the recipients of relief in their district, and report on the cases to the general committee at least once a month. Special orders in cases of necessity can at any time be given by members of committee to poor in their own districts. Such orders are available for two weeks, after which applicants must appear, or their cases must be reported on to the committee by the person granting the order. The president can at any time grant relief, or admit in urgent cases. We thus try to avoid all unnecessary routine while guarding against imposition, and the self-respecting poor have not to be badgered by heartless officials, but state their case to gentlemen who know how to respect poverty.

Thus it is that we treat our poor in Victoria; the Ballarat Asylum is a sample of many others. We have not yet learnt that poverty is a crime. There is no doubt we are sometimes imposed on; but it is far better that some rogues should be kept by our generosity, than that our fellows, Christian or not Christian, should bear unmerited suffering which it is in our power to alleviate.

LAST OF OLD STORIES RE-TOLD.

THE ACCIDENT AT THE BRUNSWICK THEATRE.

On the morning of the 25th of February, 1828, there was a great hammering and sawing at the New Brunswick Theatre, Wellclose-square, Whitechapel, as the house was to be opened that evening. The theatre had been run up in seven months by Mr. Stedman Whitwell, C.E., and it had a ponderous iron roof and a façade, the design of which had been borrowed from that of San Carlos, at Naples. It stood on the site of the old Royalty Theatre, opened in 1787, under the management of John Palmer. Lee, Lewis, Bates, Holland, and Mrs. Gibbs were then of the company; and that fine singer, Braham, made his first appearance on its stage, in the character of Cupid. It was originally intended for the performance of legitimate five-act pieces, and had opened with As You Like It; but, the patentees of the other theatres memorialising the Lord Chamberlain, the new theatre was tyrannically restricted to pantomimes and burlettas. The original theatre had been burnt down in 1826.

From the first opening of the Brunswick Theatre, a vague sense of danger had filled the minds of every one connected with it, except the proprietors: who were too eager for profits to listen to anything that might cause delay. A Mr. Pulsford, employed to survey and measure the work of the smiths, carpenters, and bricklayers, had repeatedly, even from the beginning of January, warned Mr. Maurice, one of the most active of the proprietors, of the insecurity of the roof, and of the danger of suspending heavy weights from the iron ties or chord bars. He had told Mr. Maurice (a bustling self-sufficient man, by trade a printer, in Fenchurch-street, who had from the beginning run counter to the wishes of the architect) that there was danger, and that it would be well to consult some scientific and practical men. He proposed Mr. Bramah, a civil engineer of Pimlico, and Mr. Moorman, an eminent smith in Old-street. Mr. Maurice declined, and one day came to the theatre and read to some of the workmen a letter from the contractors of the roof, dated Bristol, which said that the roof would bear any dead weight, if it was perfectly steady.

Mr. Shaw, the carpenter who built the stage, had felt an insurmountable alarm, which various small circumstances had tended to heighten. There were forty or fifty men hammering, sawing, planing, and gluing, in the carpenters' shop, which was attached to the new roof. On (Monday) the opening night, a small but ominous accident also occurred, which struck terror into the minds of two or three intelligent overlookers.

The crowding of above one hundred persons in the O. P. flies, which were hung by iron crooks to a plank that lay edgeways on the ties of the roof, suddenly made them sink about two inches. The plank had fallen flat, the hook had slipped, the rod had fallen with all its weight on the wing groove, and prevented the scenes from working. The actors were already putting on the last touch of paint, the orchestra had begun, the audience were subsiding into their places. Mr. Whitwell, alarmed, called Shaw, the carpenter, and questioned him. Shaw said that he thought some gasfitter, in putting up his tubes for lighting the wings, had let his plank fall on the grooves.

The curtain must rise soon, so Mr. Whitwell, the rather incompetent architect, said, in a flurry:

"Come up the fly, and I'll go up with you."

They went up, but found no plank. Mr. Whitwell then said to his reluctant and hurried companion:

"Now, Shaw, whip over; get upon the groove, and see what is the matter."

Shaw did so, and, after peering about a few minutes, cried out:

"Eh! Gad! there is one of the iron straps of the roof dropped on the groove. But I'll soon adjust that, with the pole from the carpenter's shop."

Whitwell said: "But, Shaw, the curtain is going up in a few minutes, and you are wanted below."

Shaw then came down, and gave orders to a man named David Wales to fix the tackle and free the scene, and they then lashed the tackle together to prevent its slipping.

In the mezzonine gallery Mr. Whitwell met his old opponent, Mr. Maurice, told him of the

accident and the means used to remedy it, and advised him to have it looked to the first thing in the morning. In the mean time, a spectator of trained powers of observation and great experience had also augured mischief, and given a warning.

Mr. Clarkson Stanfield, the eminent scene-painter of Drury Lane, and afterwards a great marine painter, had been introduced by Mr. Carruthers, one of the proprietors, to the architect, with a request that he (Mr. Stanfield) would show him the internal arrangements of Drury Lane, where the carpenters' shops and flies were affixed to the roof, but were also supported by strong underlying beams running from the posts of the proscenium to the back walls. Mr. Stanfield's quick eye saw the lower fly give way. He spoke to Shaw, and asked if it could not be propped up? Shaw said every plank had been taken away. Mr. Stanfield then said to Mr. Whitwell, who was at the back of the stage: "Does not this alarm you?"

The architect replied (and this seemed his great self-deception all through):

"I have nothing to do with that part of the business."

Mr. Stanfield replied, in his sailor-like way, "Oh! The deuce you haven't!"

On the Tuesday, so far from being lessened, the weight attached to the roof was recklessly increased. About a ton weight more of benches, &c., was carried up from the theatre to the carpenters' shop, by tackle fixed to the roof. There were then eight men in the painters' and forty men in the carpenters' shop. On this as on a previous occasion, Mr. Whitwell flew into a violent passion about the danger of the pendent and vibrating weight. He told Mr. Carruthers that he had first observed the strain on the roof on the 15th of February, while inspecting the ventilating apparatus.

Mr. Carruthers or Mr. Maurice answered angrily:

"We know what we are about, Mr. Whitwell. We don't proceed without advice. We have written to Bristol, and have got permission to hang as much weight to the roof as we like, provided it be a steady weight."

When Mr. Whitwell left, Mr. Carruthers scolded Shaw, and asked him if he (Mr. Carruthers) was his master, or Mr. Whitwell? He (Mr. Carruthers) was as good an architect, on his own behalf, he said, as Mr. Whitwell was, and he could manage the men, and he was as good a carpenter as Shaw himself.

Shaw then told Mr. Pulsford, who was also alarmed, that the timbers were not yet strutted, and said that, when they were, the carpenters' floor would not vibrate. Mr. Whitwell had previously agreed with Pulsford about the danger of overweighting the roof, but had said it was a matter over which he had no control.

On this same Tuesday, the P. S., or prompt fly, also settled about half an inch. On the Wednesday, Shaw, the clerk of the works, told Mr. Carruthers that two uprights must be fixed at the end of each fly, as the flies were too heavy for the roof. Shaw then ordered two men, named Mills and Davidson, to go to Jones's timber-yard and cut two uprights, seven inches square and twenty-two feet long. They were also to cut holes in the floors, to discover at what point the uprights could be best fixed.

On this same Wednesday morning, Mr. Carruthers (a haberdasher in Gracechurch-street) had been told for the first time that the flies had sunk. A man named Blamire told him secretly (West being jealous of the proprietor's interference with the architect, his employer) that the roof had warped. He then told Shaw to get supporters for the flies. Shaw replied, there was no danger, but it should be done. At about a quarter past five, Carruthers, dining at Maurice's, felt uneasy about the roof, and, when the cloth was drawn, slipped out to the theatre. To his surprise, all was dim and silent, and the porter told him that Shaw had knocked off the men and gone to Vauxhall. He wanted the porter to find out the carpenters, and bring them at once to put up the supports; but the porter said it was impossible then to find them out and collect them. Mr. Carruthers returned home uneasy. On the Thursday morning he went down again and expostulated with Shaw, who said it was usual to knock off early on the Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent; and that there was no danger, or his wife would not be at that very moment up-stairs, stitching canvas. The supports were then preparing.

On the Thursday morning a rehearsal had been called, of Guy Mannering. Mr. Mannering, the Dominie, Meg Merrilies, the terrible Dirk—were all on the stage or at the wings. The stage-manager was reviewing and scolding his troops; the gentlemen in the orchestra were bending over their music, or extracting extraordinary experimental notes from their instruments. All was cheerful bustle, hope, and excitement. There were about twenty-four persons on the stage or behind the scenes. Mr. Fearon, the conductor, was in the orchestra, arranging and giving out the music; and immediately before the orchestra, in the first row of the pit, sat his two sisters, as spectators.

There were two stage boxes close to the proscenium, fitted up for the proprietors. Of these, Mr. Maurice was to have one, and Mr. Carruthers the other.

Mr. P. Farren, the stage-manager, was sitting on the front of Mr. Maurice's box, and Mr. Maurice was standing close before him. Mr. Maurice had just put a farce, called The Poachers, into the stage-manager's hand, saying: "I should be glad if this could be done on Monday, it is a piece likely to do us a deal of good."

While they were still talking (it was then about twenty-five minutes to twelve o'clock), a strange noise was heard above, like a slight crash of timber. It sounded like a beam which some carpenters had let drop, and, as builders' workmen were still in the theatre, no one paid any attention to it. Another similar sound

came, and was also disregarded. The third seemed to shake the chandelier, and was accompanied by a discordant rumbling noise that lasted several seconds. The next moment Mr. Farren, looking up to see where the noise came from, saw the chandelier in the act of falling. Obeying the momentary instinct, he threw himself under shelter, and clung to a pillar of the proscenium. Mr. Maurice rushed to the centre of the stage. The roof came down; an avalanche of iron instantly tore walls and gallery down with it, and swept before it scenes, stage, orchestra, boxes, and actors. It was a tornado of girders, bricks, and timbers. A cloud of dust hid the scene of death for a moment. When perception returned, Mr. Farren found that the pillar opposite to that part of the box to which he clung alone remained: the rest was a mountain of confused ruin. On a sudden he saw something move in the rubbish near him, and Miss Yates, a girl of about twelve years of age, daughter of Mrs. Vaughan, the leader of "the tragic business," made her way towards him, her head streaming with blood. She cried: "Oh, Mr. Farren, save me!" Farren dragged the poor girl over the box, though by no means certain of his own safety, and urged her to thank the Almighty for their preservation. They remained in that place blocked up for nearly half an hour. After this awful interval of continued fear, he saw three or four of the carpenters, their faces bloody, wading and clambering among the ruins to gain the street; for the front wall had fallen, and there was a passage left, though a dangerous one. Farren called to them, rejoicing that others also had escaped, congratulated them, and inquired if the danger had quite passed, and if his present retreat was safe. They answered, he was tolerably safe; but another wall might soon fall, and if the beam which had defended him then gave way, he must be instantly killed. He then felt he had no time to lose. He broke quickly out of his extraordinary prison, struggled with difficulty through the ruins with the little girl (whom, we believe, he eventually married), and escaped without injury. Once, to his horror, on looking down, he found he had set his foot on the face of a dead man, a Mr. Gilbert, a fellow-actor, whom he recognised.

Mr. Maurice had almost escaped, when he was killed in the street, close to his own house. He had darted to the extreme line of the falling fragments, when a torrent of bricks struck him obliquely on the head, beat him to the pavement and buried him, all but one foot, which Mr. Campbell, one of the performers, recognised. His body was instantly dug out. It was lying with the head towards the theatre, and was on its stomach. The watch in the pocket was still going. The corpse was first identified by the handkerchief in the coat. While the crowd was gathering, Mr. Maurice's wife came crying, "Where is he? Take me to him. Let me see his dead body!" But some friends, passing by in a coach, prevailed upon her to leave the spot.

The escapes were all remarkable, and varied in their character. Mr. Goldsmith, one of the company, was speaking to Mr. Wyman, another actor, at the time, when by an indescribable presentiment he removed to the right-hand stage-box, exactly opposite where Mr. Farren was sitting. At that instant the lustre trembled, and the crash followed. His first feeling was to rush into the street, but nevertheless he stood paralysed till the ruins fell. He then leaped into the stage-box, where a large beam, forced down by the weight of the galleries, formed a defence against death. He saw the roof sink, with dreadful noise and confusion, and bury his friends. While struggling through the ruins, he shouted for help, and two sailors rushed in and assisted him to escape. Outside the ruin he met Mr. P. Farren, Miss Yates, and Mr. Wyman. Mr. Farren cried out to him:

"Good God, Goldsmith! have you escaped? We are the only persons who are left to tell the story. Let us fall on our knees and thank God for his protection."

Another escape was scarcely less miraculous. Shaw and his wife were employed in the counting-house, forty feet above the stage, and in an instant found themselves below the stage, with a large plank lying across their bodies. Releasing himself and wife from this plank, the man carried his wife up a staircase still standing, and having gained a window, lowered her into the street by means of a rope, and then followed. They were both much bruised, and were at once carried to the London Hospital.

Mr. Carruthers at the time of the accident was sitting on a chair on the O. P. side of the stage. His legs were crushed by the ruins, but he was extracted in about an hour and a half, with the loss of his shoes, stockings, and small-clothes. One of the actors, hearing the walls crack, and seeing the chandelier loosen and drop, by an instinctive effort reached the door, and rushed into the street about a second before the roof fell in. A moment afterwards he heard the shrieks and groans of the wounded and dying. He was too terrified to give the alarm when he fled, and was so panic stricken that he ran onward without thinking of what he was about, till he reached Covent Garden Theatre, where he had a relative performing. He remained there for a short time in a state of great agitation, then returned to the dismal scene.

Mr. Dillon, an actor, threw himself out of a window at the first alarm, and as he alighted was all but overwhelmed by the falling rubbish. He called loudly for assistance, but the persons near were afraid to venture, till one or two of the more daring ran in and rescued him. Lynch, the pantaloon, seeing the wall crumbling under the roof, and the latter sinking fast; took a flying leap through a window into an adjoining yard; and fell upon his legs and escaped. Joseph Roberts, a smith, was at the time, with a man named Purdy, fixing a hand-rail to a geometric staircase leading to the dress boxes. They heard a noise, when Mr. Purdy caught him by the hand, and said, "Come, Joe, it's all over." They ran to the door, but could not open it: but Roberts forced it with

a chisel. When they reached the street, the two men were separated by the falling of the portico, which killed Mr. Purdy and buried Roberts. When the latter was dragged out, his shoes and stockings had to be left behind. Another man, named George Hoare, observed the wall giving on the Tuesday, and thought the house would fall. Just before the accident he saw the wall "go out" about a foot. As he was preparing to collect his tools, he was carried away to the bottom of the house, and remembered nothing more until he awoke in the London Hospital.

The indirect escapes were numerous. Mrs. Vaughan, the mother of the little girl whom Mr. Farren rescued, had been sent for by the manager, but did not attend, as she had been at all the previous rehearsals. Mr. Campbell, one of the actors, had been to the rehearsal, when he remembered Mr. Maurice had asked him to deliver a note in the neighbourhood. He had not got ten yards from the door before a terrible crash made him look round, and he saw the beautiful building he had just quitted, a shapeless heap of ruins. Mr. Finley, the scene-painter, who was in his room over the stage, fell with tremendous violence; but in his descent he stuck in the balustrade of a staircase that led from the stage to his room, and was miraculously saved. Mr. Saker, a low comedian, his wife and child, were half an hour late at rehearsal, and were within a few hundred yards of the theatre when it fell. Mr. Adcock, the prompter, had just arrived at the end of Grace's-alley, in Wells-street, directly opposite the theatre, when he saw the immense building sink under the heavy roof. He ran back up the passage, but was for some time speechless.

The front wall fell on the house of Mr. Blatz, a baker, in Wells-street. Mr. Blatz heard the crash of the roof, and had time to escape before the wall fell and partly destroyed his shop.

The dead were dreadfully mutilated. Mr. Evans, the editor of the Bristol Mercury and Observer, a friend of Mr. Maurice, and who was conversing with him a few minutes before the accident, was struck by a ponderous beam on the forehead. His body was for some time taken for that of Evans, one of the doorkeepers. Leader, a carpenter, was struck by a beam from the circular boxes as he was in the act of escaping from the workshop, and was found dead, jammed against the staircase, a hammer still clenched in his right hand.

Mary Anne Fearon, a little girl, one of the leaders of the ballet, who was on the Thursday night to have performed in the Fatal Prophecy, was dreadfully crushed, and her head almost severed in two. Penfold, the doorkeeper (a superannuated clerk in the London Docks), made a desperate attempt to escape. His body was found on the steps, with the head towards the street, and the legs upward.

The wall that fell in Wells-street destroyed two houses opposite: a public-house and a baker's: and it also crushed a passing dray and two horses from Elliot's brewery. A gentleman passing, had a mass of ruins fall on one of his legs; but, by a tremendous muscular effort, drew out his foot and left his boot behind. A poor old-clothesman, named Levi, from Petticoat-lane, was reading a play-bill on an opposite wall, and was crushed by the falling ruins. His friends could only identify his body by the Table of Laws (a sort of Jewish talisman) which was found attached to his breast next his skin. The unhappy wife of this poor man became insane from grief.

In all, thirteen persons perished by this accident, and about twenty more were hurt and wounded. The street rumour at first was that one hundred performers had perished, besides one hundred spectators in the pit. Had the house fallen on the opening night, some three thousand persons must have been slain.

Soon after this terrible affair happened, a party of labourers were sent by Mr. Hardwick, the architect, then constructing the St. Catherine Docks, and he himself superintended their zealous labours. They gradually cleared away the immense mountain of bricks and broken timber, beneath which the sufferers' cries could still be heard at intervals. Towards night the men became so exhausted that they had to discontinue their search, in spite of the tears and entreaties of persons in the crowd whose relations were still missing.

At last a brave sailor, thinking he heard some one moaning in a specially dangerous part, procured a torch, forced an opening, and let himself down into the chasm. There was a deep and solemn silence enforced during his chivalrous search; but he found nothing. On Friday, more bodies were dug out; on Saturday the digging was relinquished: Mr. Hardwick himself having searched the vaults beneath the orchestra, pit, and stage. The ruin was singular in appearance. The boards of the stage, pit, and stage-boxes, were cracked into pieces, and formed a sort of rude arch. The iron roof lay like a network over the centre of the mass, and had entangled itself with the timber. It was especially noticed by the crowd that the walls were tall and slight, and that the mortar, not yet dry, had scarcely left a mark upon the bricks. The place was visited on Friday by vast crowds, including the Duke of Argyle and many persons of distinction, on whom the pickpockets made great havoc. One Jew-boy was heard to boast that he had *made* forty handkerchiefs that day.

On the Thursday week after the calamity, a public meeting was held in the London Tavern, the Lord Mayor in the chair, to set on foot a subscription for the sufferers. Alderman Birch, the celebrated pastry-cook, Sir G. Smart, Mr. Charles Kemble, Mr. Elliston, and Mr. Fawcett were present. The Duchess of St. Albans (always generous to the members of her old profession) subscribed one hundred pounds, and the Duke fifty. The secretary's statement showed what terrible suffering the accident

had caused to many clever industrious, and struggling families. Miss Freeman, a dancer, and one of the sufferers, had been sent on the stage by her parents, who were servants, and who had pinched themselves to provide her outfit. Her landlady, who was going to bury her at her own expense, was a poor shipwright's wife, with four small children. The wounded persons also suffered terrible loss. Nodder, the box-keeper, had lost one hundred and forty pounds from the previous theatre being burnt, and had paid Mr. Maurice one hundred pounds for his situation in the Brunswick Theatre. Mr. Harris, the stage-door keeper, who had his leg broken, had a daughter hurt. This girl had been a music-mistress, and had supported her father, and had got him his situation. Mr. Maurice had held two-thirds of the property of the theatre, and his family was totally wrecked by the loss. About seven hundred and fifty pounds were subscribed in the room.

The day after the accident, a meeting of the performers at the Brunswick was held at the Black Horse, in Wells-street, to ascertain who was missing. The muster-roll was read, and there was a terrible silence when the names were called.

The inquest on the bodies was held at the Court-house, in Wellclose-square, before Mr. Maurice Thomas, the coroner.

The evidence all went to prove the strange infatuation with which the proprietors, blindly eager for reimbursement, had hurried forward to their ruin. The clerk of the works, the surveyor, the architect, all knew that the roof was settling down. The property-man was so sure of it, that he had determined to quit the theatre. A gentleman who came to the play on the Tuesday, and found that the box-doors would not shut, suspected danger, and left the theatre. Another person, on seeing the front wall bulge on the Tuesday, would not enter, but returned home. Only on the Monday, the principal carpenter of Drury Lane Theatre had pronounced that the walls were not strong enough, or the cement dry enough, to support an iron roof weighing, with its adjuncts, sixty tons.

The inquest continued till the first week in April. The evidence of all the witnesses was characterised by recriminations, pitiful evasions, and some falsehood. The architect was anxious to show that he had warned the proprietors; the surviving proprietor was desirous to prove that he had never been properly warned; the builders tried to convince the jury that they had built the place firmly and well. The contradictions were sometimes palpable, as when Mr. Whitwell declared he had never been warned of the danger, whereas he himself actually gave in evidence that he had been up in the flies on the Monday night to examine the cause of their sinking. Mr. Carruthers, too, was so nervously anxious about the flies that he had ordered them to be propped, and yet had had no surveyor to advise him as to the safety of the roof.

The eventual verdict was, "Accidental death by the fall of the roof of the Brunswick Theatre, which was occasioned in consequence of hanging heavy weights thereto; and the jury are of opinion that the proprietors are highly reprehensible in allowing such weight to be so attached. And we fine, in each of the two cases, a deodand of forty shillings."

A scientific writer of the day, reviewing the causes of this accident, says it was a very hazardous experiment to construct walls eighty-eight feet high, and one hundred and seventeen feet in length, unsupported by transverse ties, and only two and a half bricks in thickness.

During the building of these walls, their vibration, and that of the scaffolding, had been so great, that tie beams had to be thrown across the building from wall to wall to keep them steady. These ties, when the roof was laid on, were sawn away, leaving a clear parallelogram one hundred and seventeen feet by sixty-two feet. It must be remembered, too, in extenuation of the architect's remissness, that iron roofs were little used in 1828. Mr. Carruthers had never seen one at all till Mr. Whitwell had taken him down to the Deptford Gasworks and showed him one, and there told him that if the building were ever burnt down, the roof would be worth two-thirds of its original price. Some years before an iron roof at Messrs. Maudsley's, in the Westminster-road, had broken down the building, and this should have been a warning well known to Mr. Whitwell as an architect.

This terrible accident occupied the public mind so entirely, that for some time it effaced even the controversy as to the justice or injustice of the then recent battle of Navarino. The survivors published pamphlets, and a poem was written on the subject. Learned editors also discovered a passage in Tacitus which described a similar accident at an amphitheatre at Fidena, and in which fifty thousand persons were either killed or maimed.

WALLACHIAN PEASANTRY.

Two people wonderful for their griminess; two people living in a hole; half in the ground and half out of it; are Wallachian peasants. They are small, they are dark, they are shiny in patches, they are beautiful. Their large, dark, soft eyes are full of unspoken poetry and kindness; and their language, very peculiar in its cadences, is all vowels—soothing, luxurious, musical. They live partly under ground, for warmth in winter, and because digging a deepish hole in the ground saves much expense of building; not that building in these countries is very costly. Mud and straw, such primitive bricks as the Israelites made for Pharaoh, all squashed together without form or shape, are Wallachian building materials. Their idea of architecture is equally primitive: not extending, as a rule, much beyond the British infantine conception of a mud pie. An irregular oval with a hole at the top, a mush-

room same size all the way down, that is the Wallachian idea of architectural beauty. A traveller requires to come pretty close to a village before he can reasonably indulge the thought that he is near any human habitation. When there he looks around, and is bound upon the testimony of his senses to suppose that he has suddenly arrived among a colony of Lilliputians. The inhabitants, of whom he does not see a single one, have all run into their holes and concealed themselves at his approach, for fear that he should be some Government official of despotic proclivities on a taxo-flogging expedition. Experience has rendered them tolerably subtle in such cases. They scent the tax-gatherer from afar. The first field labourer who sees him from a distance, hastens homeward, and the whole village hides. Everything the peasants possess, disappears at once in holes of the earth. They hide their corn, their cheeses, such few spangles and ornaments as serve to array them on weddings and festival days, and they conceal their young women most jealously of all. Then they prepare to abide the event, whatever it may be. They are a timid race; a race of so timid and yielding a character as never to stand up against oppression and front it boldly. When they are beaten, they howl and cry for mercy; they do not kick, but it is absolutely astonishing how much beating they will consent to take, before anything is to be got out of them. They are shrewd calculators, and weigh thumps against ducats with a calmness which would astonish a hot-blooded Briton not a little. The scourge has been too familiar an object to the Wallachian peasant for centuries, to have any shame whatever attached to its smart. He is not bold, indeed, in the sense of offering any resolute resistance to tyranny; but if a tyrant wants to kill him he can die in a soft, yielding, lumpish sort of way, with howls.

His mind is a queer puzzle; his views of education are strictly limited. The village priest, who is his sole instructor, does not possess scientific or literary information of a much more extensive character than he himself does; but now and then they hold a hazy sort of discourse together upon spiritual affairs, which are rather of a distasteful character to him, the peasant. He observes, not without certain sly commentaries of his own upon the subject, that the priest invariably gets the better of him on these occasions. He finds that promises of future rewards and blessings appear to depend on his being ready, on the shortest notice, to do the priest's work instead of his own. He notices that such promises may be bought with commodities of any nature useful to the priest; and he fancies that he remembers a blessing having been administered to him by the reverend gentleman on one occasion when his wife deemed it highly expedient, from some unknown reason, to box his reverence's ears. On the whole, he has not much respect for the priest—who is a peasant, like himself, as his father was before him, the priesthood being more or less an hereditary calling—but though he has not much awe or love for ecclesiastics, he has a mighty great esteem for his church. In the first place, it is probably the only decent weather-tight house he has ever seen; and it is usually decorated with an imposing splendour calculated to enlist his sympathies and to startle his imagination. Its internal decorations would be remarkable for their magnificence in any country. Its walls are covered with pictures, and the pictures are all ablaze with gold and jewels. Even the martyrdoms of the saints are represented in the most agreeable manner, and if it be necessary to depict a holy personage as undergoing the process of broiling, after the manner of St. Lawrence, it is satisfactory to observe that his sufferings do not appear to be in any way unpleasant to him, and that, on the whole, he appears rather to enjoy them. The church is to the Wallachian peasant everything which is represented by the church and the theatre combined, in other countries. When a poor, half-starved, miserable man, with no human joy in this world but now and then a drink of corn spirit, leaves his earth hole for a gorgeous edifice, of which the air is laden with incense, no wonder that he is powerfully affected. Thus he delights in saints' days and religious ceremonies. While heartily despising and suspecting the priesthood, he eagerly welcomes every opportunity of visiting the church; and although he would not be averse to a battle of wits, or even a bout of fisticuffs with the parson, every thread in his gorgeous robe of office is hallowed in the peasant's eyes. The ceremonies of his religion are as sacred to him as its ministers are indifferent, or even despicable; and, once past the porch of his temple, he casts himself upon the ground and kisses the stones in fervent worship.

Intelligent, argumentative faith he has none. Any person, clerical or otherwise, who presumed to differ with received opinions would experience little consideration or mercy. Religious heresy is the only thing that would rouse active resistance in the soft apathetic nature of the Wallachian. Of course he has not the faintest idea of the tenets of his faith. He would fight and die for them, but he does not know what they are. In so far as he has any thought at all about other worlds, his imagination runs riot in vague poetic dreams. He believes in the devil as a personage who has a very intimate acquaintance with human affairs and takes an active part in the ordinary business of everyday life. He believes in all manner of secondary spirits and aërial unseen influences. Above all, he believes in the existence of spirits who keep watch and ward over hidden treasure, and wander about mountains and pathless moors in search of travellers to befriend or punish in accordance with their caprice. His songs and his legends all dwell reverentially upon such themes. The favourite personages of a Roumanian story are a beautiful maiden, forlorn and benighted in a forest, pursued by some persecuting demon, and deli-

vered from death and bonds by a valiant horseman passing by at an opportune moment, or attracted to her rescue by spiritual influences. The horseman always has golden hair and a radiant face, enchanted arms, and a steed fleeter than the wind. The demon flees at his appearance, and he bears off the beautiful captive to his home, and receives a kingdom for her dowry. Another fancy of the Wallachian peasantry is that every leaf and flower has life and immortality. They suppose that leaves and flowers are the habitations of imprisoned souls, and their songs upon this subject have a freshness and pathos hardly to be found in the popular ballads of any other country. The Wallachian doinc, or folk lore, has something of an Ossianic character; but, instead of representing the thoughts of a stern solemn people living in a misty mountain-land, it breathes the ardent spirit of a southern race, inhabiting a delightful climate, beautiful with purple skies and gorgeous flowers.

Between the imaginative and the actual life of the Wallachian peasantry there is a dark and dreary gulf. The British traveller experiences considerable difficulty in disconnecting their personal appearance from that of chimney sweepers. Their neighbours, the Russians and the Turks, are both bath-loving people. The Turks are scrupulously and delicately clean. Cleanliness is a part of their religion, and is an inborn want and necessity of most of the Oriental races. But the Wallachian peasant never performs any sort of ablution, from the cradle to the grave. Water is often a scarcity in the Roumanian villages; but the peasant who inhabits the banks of the Danube is quite as dirty as his fellow-countryman who resides in the interior. The meanest hut in Turkey proper has appliances for washing; the hovel of the Roumanian peasant has none. In Turkey the women of the meanest household may seclude themselves in some sort of decent privacy. Not so in Roumania. The Wallachian peasant, his family, his pigs, a few dogs, and perhaps a sick pony, live all together in an oblong hole, with an opening at the top to let out the smoke and another to creep through when they would go abroad. The Turk loves light and air; the Wallachian lives in utter darkness.

He is quite as unlike his Russian neighbour. A Wallachian peasant will get drunk now and then, but drunkenness is not by any means his habitual vice. His idea of earthly felicity is to lie down on his back in the sunshine, with a select circle of female acquaintances, and drone out songs through his nose, with his eyes shut. He will pursue this entertainment with great industry and enjoyment for many hours at a time, if left uninterrupted in the peaceful exercise of his natural inclination. He is perhaps sensual, but his sensuality is of a peculiar kind, and is not at all coarse or gross like the sensuality of the bumpkins of the north and west. It is chiefly made up of laziness. He delights in being idle. Of the pleasures of eating he has no conception, and is as lean as a herring. A dozen Wallachian ploughmen have not a pound of fat among them, and hardly an ounce of muscle. They are soft, flabby, loosely made creatures, of whom an Englishman of ordinary physical force could tie a dozen by the heels together with a wisp of hay.

If a strong man collar one of these people in anger, the creature seems to shrink and shrivel in his sheepskin, and cannot well be grappled. A generous man would no more strike one of them than he would hit a child. They are great liars, and apt enough to make busy folk who have anything to do with them rather angry. But when caught in any trick, their great tender appealing eyes and quaking limbs plead too successfully to permit indignation to take an active form of hostility. There seems something softening and enervating in the moist, warm, marshy air around them. Even the wolves, who are fierce in Russia, are cowardly, tame, skulking brutes on the Lower Danube, fit merely to carry off a pet lamb, or an invalid gosling. The horses, so spirited and strong in Hungary, and so fine in Turkey, are but scraggy dejected little brutes in Roumania, rarely above twelve or thirteen hands high, and quite unfit for the saddle. Everything in these countries seems equally enervated and spiritless. Hunting and shooting, among the most boisterous of sports in other places, are but tame, gentle sort of craft in Wallachia. The principal game is the bustard: a gigantic species of wild turkey, which has now almost disappeared from the British islands, but is still found in great abundance among the interminable bogs and marshes of the Danubian Principalities. This bird (who revenges himself with great acrimony upon his human persecutors, by presenting the toughest flesh ever penetrated by mortal tooth), is held in great esteem, and every one who has a gun, devotes a portion of his leisure and energies to the pursuit of this indigestible game. But, instead of putting on a pair of double-soled boots and leather gaiters, and striding off boldly after his birds, the Wallachian sportsman lies down in a cart, and causes himself to be driven into a bog: where he waits until some misguided bustard comes near, and then leisurely takes a pot shot at him.

The surprise of a covey of English partridges at seeing a person coming after them in a four-wheeled waggon, would doubtless be considerable, but it probably does not astonish the bustards who have been accustomed to accept martyrdom on those conditions, from time immemorial. The marsh lands of the Lower Danube are among the best shooting grounds that advancing civilisation has left in Europe. They swarm with incredible multitudes of wild-fowl of every description. Ducks and geese, now grown rare in Western Europe, are met with in such numbers as to look like clouds in the air, when upon the wing; and in some parts of the country, hares and partridges are equally numerous; while snipe may be shot as fast as

a keen sportsman can load his gun to knock them over. But the Wallachian peasant, though he has seldom anything to eat, beyond a little maize pudding, or black bread and onions, with a few grapes now and then in the vintage season, does not take the trouble to trap game. In the immediate neighbourhood of the few large towns, such as Bucharest, Yassy, Giurgevo, and Craiova, a few hares and partridges with now and then a bustard or a woodcock, are brought lazily to market and sold for a few pence. The want of railroads or rapid communication of any kind has hitherto left these vast game preserves unremunerative, though very lately some few birds have begun to find their way to Paris, carefully packed in wheat—which is found to be an excellent preservative against decomposition. The Wallachian peasantry seldom think of eating any of the abundant food within their reach. They are simply too idle to go after it. If now and then in winter time they find a hare half crippled by the frost, they have a queer way of cooking him in quick lime, and will sometimes take the trouble to pick his bones; but not often. If the Wallachian peasant be called upon to choose between rest and food, he chooses the former. The most peculiar and interesting class of the Roumanian country people are the gipsies, who are found in great numbers throughout the Principalities. Their women are singularly graceful and lovely; their men are the same sort of agricultural thieves as elsewhere. Both men and women pretend to supernatural powers, and practise the arts of sorcery and divination, sometimes with enough success to impress the unreflecting not a little. They have unwritten laws and traditional customs to which they adhere very strictly; and they are looked upon without any unkindness by their neighbours.

The favourite amusement of a Wallachian boyard when he visits his estate, is, to send for the nearest band of gipsies, whose songs and whose dances are sure to amuse him, and have truly a racy charm about them. The gipsies are the best farriers, cattle doctors, and horse buyers in the country. It is not good to offend them, but they are harmless and kindly-tempered when unmolested.

A WOMAN'S JUSTICE.

IN EIGHT CHAPTERS. CHAPTER V.

When the gentlemen returned to the library they found Cecil seated, Major Middleton's desk open before her. She was very pale, but her hands no longer trembled, nor did her voice falter. She recalled, in a few sentences, her brother's last words—how, in the first instance, he had exacted a promise from her to destroy without inspecting, *everything* contained in that desk; and how that, afterwards, in one of those violent fits of irritation to which he was subject—more than usually increased by the knowledge that Mr. Chester had been in the house—he had forced a promise from her that she would read whatever she found there. Then, unfastening the secret recess, she produced the miniatures, letters, and marriage certificate.

It was curious to observe how Mr. Cathcart warmed to his work the moment he scented a mystery. He looked at the miniature; he had known Cecil and her brother all their lives. "No possible mistake," he said, "as to who is the gentleman; but who is the lady?"

Cecil placed the certificate before him.

The lawyer scanned it without, and then with, his spectacles, and passed it to Mr. Chester, simply saying, "Awkward!" He then read the letters. Nothing could be gathered from the expression of his countenance, as one by one, after asking Cecil if he were to pass them on to Chester, he did so.

"The witness Dacre?" inquired Mr. Cathcart, carelessly.

"Is drowned—dead."

Mr. Cathcart twirled a pen.

"There!" he said; "you have obeyed your brother's last injunction, and now you can obey his first. These papers need give you no uneasiness."

"True," said Cecil. "I have simply to seek out my brother's wife and child, and resign to them what I imagined, until this evening, was mine."

Mr. Cathcart laid his two hands firmly on the edge of the table, fixed his eyes steadily on Cecil, pushed himself back in his chair, while Cecil spoke. She became deathly white, but there was no tremor in her voice.

Ronald Chester moved, as if he were going to place his hand on those of Cecil, which were clasped together on the table; but he did not do it.

"My dear Miss Middleton, my dear young lady," said Mr. Cathcart, "you cannot, surely, be serious? Any woman can sign herself 'your affectionate wife;' and the major must have had strong reasons—strong cause, indeed, against this—this—person to have written these denunciatory words across so fair a face."

"When men are tired of women they write anything," said Cecil.

"As to the certificate, it may be only waste paper," persisted Mr. Cathcart.

"It is my duty," said Cecil, "to ascertain whether it is so or not."

"You may depend upon it, if the case is tangible the woman will see to it."

"Suppose she is dead; who is to see justice done to my brother's child, if I do not?"

"Believing the child to be your brother's, which might be questioned."

"I thought of that," said Cecil. "But from these letters, you see, the fact must have been admitted."

"Really," and Mr. Cathcart smiled, that peculiarly doubting lawyer's smile, which seems to have been patented by the profession; "Really my dear lady, you seem very anxious to get rid of your good fortune."

Cecil shivered from head to foot. She returned the melancholy gaze of Ronald's eyes

with an intense look of love. When she could command her voice, she said:

"Justice costs me very dear, but I must render justice."

Mr. Cathcart shrugged his shoulders, and inquired "To whom?—To yourself and my friend here, or to these mysterious personages, whose very existence your brother evidently desired to ignore, until seized upon by—by——Well, no matter. But *he* made no provision in any way for this *wife* and *child*."

"His injustice could be no excuse for mine."

"What do you purpose to do?"

"I fear," answered Cecil—and now her voice faltered, for she was well-nigh worn down by contending emotions—"I have nothing to propose—no *plan* to set before you; but I wish to discover Mrs. Middleton and her child. *You* will know how to set about it. I also wish those documents copied, I retaining the originals. I want this done at once, and I have not strength to copy them myself; the last four or five hours have unnerved me."

"You had better speak with Miss Middleton on this subject before it goes any further," said Mr. Cathcart, rising. "I will wait in the next room."

For some minutes no word passed between them. Ronald Chester stood beside the one love of his whole life, and she laid her head on his bosom, sobbing that dry, hard, tearless sob of agony which can be felt and heard, but not described.

"It was a dreary duty," she whispered, "and oh the cruelty of leaving me such a task! Ronald, my love, my life, you know what is my duty."

"Clearly, Cecil," he replied, "clearly, you are doing what is right, and what is honest. My noble Cecil! Never so fondly loved, never so highly honoured, as at this moment when we are torn asunder!"

With a sharp cry Cecil sprang to her feet, threw back her head, and to the last day of his life Ronald never forgot the light bursting like a sudden glory through her tears.

"No, Ronald, not that. If my brother's marriage were legal, and his child lives, I cannot prove my love and homage by making you master of Middleton Lea. But"—and here the heroine melted into the woman, and proved how one of her brother's poisoned arrows rankled in the wound—"you will not forsake me, Ronald; though I am faded, our love is unfading, we will go together to the New World: *that* will be our harbour of refuge, there we will love and live and toil together. Did you think I would let you go alone?"

CHAPTER VI.

When Ronald Chester sought Mr. Cathcart, he found him in a state of excitement and exasperation wonderful to witness.

"I never," said the worthy lawyer, "met with such an absurd case in all my experience. Chester, I have known you from your boyhood, a capital common-sense fellow, and as honourable as man could be, you surely will exorcise this romantic spirit out of Miss Middleton? Now, don't speak; if that hard-hearted scoundrel her brother had considered his marriage worth a straw, he would not in the first instance have determined to destroy its evidence, knowing the woman would crop up. It was one of those entanglements of which I dare say he had plenty, but which he did not believe in, if he had, the boy—his own boy! but I dare say he did not believe in him either. All I would entreat of Miss Middleton to do, is to let the matter rest. If there is a wife she will be certain to make her appearance; let her bring forward her claim, and then it is for us to dispute it."

"I know Cecil's sense of justice," interrupted Mr. Chester. "If the wife is living, she would, I think, ere this have made a claim. If she does not come forward, Miss Middleton will belive she is dead, and will seek the child, of whom she will consider herself the natural as well as the lawful guardian."

"Lawful fiddlestick!" exclaimed the lawyer, thoroughly irritated. "I beg your pardon, my dear Chester, but I can't help it. This is simply a question of law. Of course you can influence Miss Middleton. She has no right to know anything about that wife and child, until a proper claim is made."

"But she *does* know it," said Mr. Chester, calmly, "and I know *her*. If she can find that child, and he is legitimate, she will retreat on her five thousand pounds."

"What madness! Give up all claim to that noble property—to what?—to whom? Give up her love for you——"

"No, my good friend, that has nothing to do with property, except the property we have each in the other."

Mr. Cathcart paused, and stared at him.

"All I ask is to let time and the law take its course; let Miss Middleton remain as she is; take no steps to discover the child or the woman; can she not give the law fair play?"

"Cecil does not think of law, she only thinks of justice," said Chester.

"That's an unfair hit," replied Mr. Cathcart, "but I tell you the case will not hold water. She seeks to convert a fiction into a fact. Major Middleton's death has been in all the papers, he has been buried more than a month. If there had been a wife, she would have been heard of before now."

"Let us say good night now, and meet here to-morrow," said Mr. Chester.

"Very good. I need not see Miss Middleton again to-night. Make my respects to her, tell her neither men nor women ever did any good by taking the law into their own hands. All I ask of her is to let matters have their course."

But Cecil would not do that. She would not even go to Middleton Lea until every possible means had been used to trace the woman and child, whom she felt assured had been foully wronged.

If those who do not believe in the nobility of soul that makes man, only "a little lower than the angels" could have seen the earnestness with which Ronald Chester entered into Cecil's views and seconded her endeavours to trace the unfortunate woman who, either with or without cause, had been abandoned by the man who had sworn to protect her—they might have been cured of an infidelity which is alike an insult to the created and the creator.

Mr. Cathcart confessed that, insane as they both were, their insanity had done him good.

"My belief, sir, is," he said, when talking the case over with a professional friend (for it had "oozed out" and become matter of interest, either as something to praise or blame, but at all events, something to wonder at and talk about), "my belief, sir, is that Miss Middleton will have as much happiness in what she considers 'rendering justice' as she would have had in taking possession of Middleton Lea. Now, suppose this child is discovered—which I devoutly hope it never will be—with a dancing or a singing woman for its mother—that exquisite, delicate creature, and that high-hearted man, will set off to the New World, calling themselves (and at their age too, for the lady is past thirty) rich in each other's love. Yes, and believing it, too; *believing it*, sir!

"Miss Middleton, sir, is the victim of the wildest dream of justice, that ever disturbed a woman's brain! All I entreated of her, was, to wait until the wife made a claim. It is not one woman in ten, who understands reason; but what makes the matter more aggravating, is, Miss Middleton *does*—on every subject but this. I am very glad that such justice is not contagious, for if it was," concluded Mr. Cathcart, taking off his spectacles, and speaking in a confidential low tone to his friend, "as Ronald had the truthful impudence to tell me, there would be an end to law. However, sir, for all that (this is strictly between you and me), it does one good to see that noble woman's disinterestedness, and know that it is real, and true. It is more refreshing than a cruise to Norway in the long vacation! Selfishness, sir, is the curse of this age of electro-plate and stucco, and yet here, sir, are a full grown man and woman, who have no idea of the sensation!"

Certainly Mr. Cathcart had never so unwillingly placed himself in communication with the police as he presently proceeded to do. Cecil, not satisfied with what she believed would be the coldness of his instructions, saw the detective officer who was to be employed in this delicate investigation, and quickened his perceptions with the hope of a handsome reward if he succeeded. Of course she was beset with friends and advisers, who held with Mr. Cathcart, that it would have been wiser to have taken possession, and waited. It was astonishing how all degrees of "friendliness" encircled the heiress and her betrothed—every suggestion being "for her good." She listened with the calm and gentle courtesy inseparable from her nature, but remained firm and faithful to what she considered justice.

CHAPTER VII.

Hours and days passed anxiously and heavily, bringing hardly any information from the detective officer who accompanied the lawyer's clerk in the search which Cecil had so promptly determined upon. One week they were in Scotland; next week, they were drifting from one to another of the Channel Islands, after what seemed to all but Cecil a forlorn hope. Yet the fact of the marriage, and the fact that a child was born, seemed established—to the great disgust of Mr. Cathcart. A clue gathered up in Guernsey sent the two men to Baden-Baden, whence a strange wild story was transmitted to their employers. This story was to the effect that, at what they called "a grand hotel," Major Middleton's last visit was perfectly remembered. He was accompanied by a delicate blue-eyed blonde, as tiny and fantastic as a fairy, and who sang like an angel; but who, one night after a concert, disappeared with a Russian tenor, who married her next morning. This did not disconcert the major in the least; during the whole of the following day he was the gayest of the gay at all the places

Where men do congregate,

and patronised the Russian tenor's next concert in a very liberal manner. He had created too marked a reputation for eccentricity during former seasons, to admit of the possibility of a mistake as to his identity.

The beautiful blonde (thus the story ran on) had made a confidante of the lady who sat at "the receipt of custom" at the hotel, and had assured her that, even if he had been a free man, nothing would have induced her to marry "cette sauvage magnifique, Major Middleton." She had made that little excursion with him from sheer pity. "Madame Middleton," whom she described as being fierce as "Vesuvius," "dark as night," and in bad health, had altogether made life so triste for the poor major, that in pity she gave him a little variety, but to marry him!—it would have been too absurd—"he had not a note in his voice!" Of course inquiry was made if this person had stated where "Madame Middleton" was? Somewhere in Scotland, the signora had said. The officer had been there; had traced the bride and bridegroom to Oban and into the wilds of Arasaig, where the latter had established renown as a fisherman and cragsman, daring and doing what the Highlanders could not achieve. Cecil's cheek paled, and her tears fell at the record of her brother's vices; but her eyes brightened when she found his feats of courage and strength unforgotten.

The lady's beauty was also well remembered, and even in those early days of wedlock, the mistress of the hotel at Oban had observed, that "they were not that loving together as might have been expected, seeing they were just wed. The lady, 'a foreigner, poor body,' cried a deal,

and the gentleman never heeded. She was 'awsome' too, sometimes, in her tempers, and she" (the landlady) "was sorry for baith." It would seem that Major Middleton soon wearied of his wedded life, for the next time he was traced—there were now no footprints of his wife—he reappeared at Baden. It was evident that he had left the lady he had married, and that he had conceived a violent hatred towards her. One of the major's brother officers, hearing of the investigation, called on Mr. Cathcart, and suggested that perhaps she might be discovered in a lunatic asylum, for the major once, and once only, had mentioned to him what he called his "miserable marriage" (they had been close comrades as brothers during the Crimean war), and had distinctly stated that she was insane. "But surely," Cecil said, "if that were the case, there would have been some trace of the fact—she must have been paid for in some asylum. And the child! Her brother could not have left his own child without provision."

Instead of enlightening, this communication perplexed, even the keen-witted lawyer. So confident did Cecil become that both mother and child were alive, that she prepared for her intended emigration, making all necessary arrangements for the well-doing of Middleton Lea—as though she were its agent, not its owner. Gradually her friendly advisers dropped into mere acquaintances—hardly that. She had cast herself from her high estate by her own act, and out of the established mode and circle of her race. She was monstrously eccentric. Some whose advice had failed to make an impression on her, considered her conduct as an unmarried lady highly indelicate.

Then Mr. Chester's friends gradually cooled down to nodding and "how-d'ye-doing," and in course of time became near-sighted when they met him. Some declared they thought a man little better than "a fool" who could not manage to make a woman who loved him, do anything he pleased; others sneered at the poor-spirited idea of giving up such a place as Middleton Lea! when any fellow with common sense could have "turned the wind." A few above the common herd understood and appreciated Cecil's justice, and respected Chester for the freedom of heart and conduct he awarded to his betrothed. His independent spirit yearned to be the architect of its own fortune, and he would have accepted hers, only because he could not have had her without it. There are some such nobly loving hearts still in the world, thank God!

Mr. Cathcart at length declared that everything had been done that could be done, that every stone had been turned that could be turned, except one: an advertisement for the missing ones might be inserted in the newspapers; but Cecil shrank from *that*, it was such an exposure of her brother's vices, such a reflection on her brother's memory. She dwelt with intense pain on what she felt to be a thousand times worse than the suffering her brother's selfishness and caprices had obliged her to endure—the heartlessness and cruelty of thus abandoning his wife and child. His hardness, his tyranny, his bitter taunts, were all buried with him; but this living proof of a thoroughly heartless nature wounded her beyond endurance, and ate into her heart.

CHAPTER VIII.

WINTER was

"Lingering in the lap of May."

Cecil believed as firmly as ever that her brother's wife and child would be discovered, and as firmly as ever refused to assume a position to which she had no claim. Time was passing, and Ronald Chester must either go abroad or relinquish the prospect that promised brightly for the future.

It was noon, the noon of what would be a long sunless day, calling but faint odours from the early flowers; the wind wavering between east and west; little grey clouds drifting beneath a hazy sky.

Cecil's first act when she entered the library was to shut down the window, and, though the room was due south, to draw up the blind. There was no sun to exclude. The fatal ebony desk stood in its old place. She drew a chair to the table, arranged paper and envelopes, and sat, pen in hand, not writing, but looking upward as if awaiting help to arrange and express her thoughts.

Suddenly her reverie was broken by a knock at the door. South, her old faithful servant, in answer to his mistress's "Come in," entered, and, white and trembling, advanced to the table and grasped the back of a chair with both hands, looking earnestly at her.

"What is it, South? Why do you not speak?"

"In a minute, Miss Cecil. Just one minute to get my breath and set how to begin. I don't see how to believe my eyes or ears. I wish Mr. Chester was on the spot, and Mr. Cathcart says to me, as if I did not know it, 'Miss Middleton is an angel,' he says; 'only she shouldn't go against the nature of things, South, he says——'"

"Never mind what Mr. Cathcart said, South; that cannot have agitated you."

"No, Miss Cecil; but he's below; he is in my pantry this blessed minute. I know he is; for he has as many turns in him as an eel; so, to make sure, I lock't him in, and there's the key," added South, triumphantly: "the scamp!"

"Are you in your senses, South? Are you speaking of Mr. Cathcart?"

"No, ma'am; but my brain is moydered, and no wonder. It's that scamp of the world, Charles, Miss Cecil—Charles—Charley Dacre, that dared to say I was jealous of him—Charles, that knew all the ins and outs, the bads and goods, of him that's gone, that I told you was sent to America—the poor Master's pad-groom—and sure, if he had a mind to come from the bottom of the sea, where so many honest boys are drowned, he might have done it at once, and spared us all the trouble and bother we've had—not to count the expense,

and keeping you out of your rights. I never was glad to set eyes on Charley Dacre before, but the minute I saw him, I thought what was on the road, and that we should get the rights of everything at last. There's hardly an ounce of flesh on his bones nor yet a decent rag on his back, and he says he hasn't as much as would bury him!"

"South," exclaimed Cecil, breathlessly, rising from her chair, "I do not care to hear that; I want to hear about my brother's wife; he was present at the marriage?"

"He was, miss, and at something else too; only sit down, dear mistress, till I get out what——May I be forgiven for it, I'm a proud man to have heard! He was present *at the poor lady's funeral*, and, what's more, he saw the last of the child, which died before its mother; and the mother never riz her head after that, nor says Charley Dacre, went into tantrums nor desperation, but settled into melancholy madness, and the major put her into a lunatic asylum, and paid for her handsomely, though he would never see her after the birth of the baby, which he disowned. And when she died she was buried with her child. Oh, Miss Cecil! sure it's not fainting you are?"

Cecil did not faint. She told South to get her a glass of water, and not speak again for a few minutes. When he left the room, her trembling heart echoed her murmured thanksgiving:

"Lord, I thank thee that my brother's memory is purified from the great sin that was pressing me into my grave!"

In less than two hours Charles Dacre was beneath the harrow of Mr. Cathcart's cross-examination, and the same evening the clear-headed old lawyer journeyed only a few miles out of London, to the asylum where the poor lady died, and to the churchyard where she had been buried in the same grave with her child. It is one of the unexplained readings of corrupt nature that the men who are most zealous and indefatigable in the destruction of female virtue are always the most violent against the woman whom they suspect of infidelity to themselves. Whatever cause produced Major Middleton's hatred of the woman whom he loved after his fashion well enough to marry, never came to light.

Dacre, when questioned on the point, only answered that Major Middleton was a very particular gentleman—very particular—especially when he began to get a little tired of a lady. But Mrs. Middleton was a foreigner, and as fond of liberty as the major himself, and very "wild-like" from first to last. He never knew who she was or where she came from. Master seemed to think a great deal of her at first, and at one time told him their next move should be to Middleton Lea; but they soon got to be very unhappy. She was the only lady his master was ever afraid of. He used to swear she was mad; and so she was (Dacre thought) from the very first, off and on. Mr. Cathcart repeated this to Cecil, who entreated that no more questions should be asked. All that was necessary to be known, was known. Her brother had not deserted either wife or child, and the past should be buried with them. It was as dishonourable to pry into the secrets of the dead as of the living. Dacre should have a sum of money to enable him to go where he pleased, and she — *they* — would take possession of Middleton Lea after their marriage; that is, when they returned from their wedding tour.

The worthy lawyer astonished South by rushing into the dining-room, and shaking him by the hand; "as cordially," said South, when he repeated it in the pride of his heart, "as if I was a gentleman!"

"South," said Mr. Cathcart, "I look upon a faithful servant, as a family friend, and you have been in the family twenty years. My blood boils when I think of the wicked cruelty that obliged her to see those letters."

"He could not help it, sir," said South, "no more than a cat can help torturing before it destroys. To think of them two being children of the same parents, sir!"

"And to think now of her and her husband's long-deferred happiness, South. Heaven bless them both! Nevertheless, a word in your ear, South." The lawyer's eyes twinkled as he whispered it. "I hope I shall never have in my office, as long as I live and stick to business, another case of Woman's Justice, South!"

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THE MOONSTONE.

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The Journal of Ezra Jennings (*Concluded*).

The first and foremost question, is the question of Mr. Blake's health.

So far as it is possible for me to judge, he promises (physically speaking) to be quite as susceptible to the action of the opium to-night, as he was at this time last year. He is, this afternoon, in a state of nervous sensitiveness which just stops short of nervous irritation. He changes colour readily; his hand is not quite steady; and he starts at chance noises, and at unexpected appearances of persons and things.

These results have all been produced by deprivation of sleep, which is in its turn the nervous consequence of a sudden cessation in the habit of smoking, after that habit has been carried to an extreme. Here are the same causes at work again, which operated last year; and here are, apparently, the same effects. Will the parallel still hold good, when the final test has been tried? The events of the night must decide.

While I write these lines, Mr. Blake is amusing himself at the billiard table in the inner hall, practising different strokes in the game, as he was accustomed to practise them when he was a guest in this house in June last. I have brought my journal here, partly with a view to occupying the idle hours which I am sure to have on my hands between this and to-morrow morning; partly in the hope that something may happen which it may be worth my while to place on record at the time.

Have I omitted any thing, thus far? A glance at yesterday's entry shows me that I have forgotten to note the arrival of the morning's post. Let me set this right, before I close these leaves for the present, and join Mr. Blake.

I received a few lines then, yesterday, from Miss Verinder. She has arranged to travel by the afternoon train, as I recommended. Mrs. Merridew has insisted on accompanying her. The note hints that the old lady's generally excellent temper is a little ruffled, and requests all due indulgence for her, in consideration of her age and her habits. I will endeavour, in my relations with Mrs. Merridew, to emulate the moderation which Betteredge displays in his relations with me. He received us to-day, portentously arrayed in his best black suit, and his stiffest white cravat. Whenever he looks my way, he remembers that I have not read Robinson Crusoe since I was a child, and he respectfully pities me.

Yesterday, also, Mr. Blake had the lawyer's answer. Mr. Bruff accepts the invitation—under protest. It is, he thinks, clearly necessary that a gentleman possessed of the average allowance of common sense, should accompany Miss Verinder to the scene of, what he will venture to call, the proposed exhibition. For want of a better escort, Mr. Bruff himself will be that gentleman.—So here is poor Miss Verinder provided with two "chaperons." It is a relief to think that the opinion of the world must surely be satisfied with this!

Nothing has been heard of Sergeant Cuff. He is no doubt still in Ireland. We must not expect to see him to-night.

Betteredge has just come in, to say that Mr. Blake has asked for me. I must lay down my pen for the present.

* * * * *

Seven o'clock.—We have been all over the refurnished rooms and staircases again; and we have had a pleasant stroll in the shrubbery which was Mr. Blake's favourite walk when he was here last. In this way, I hope to revive the old impressions of places and things as vividly as possible in his mind.

We are now going to dine, exactly at the hour at which the birthday dinner was given last year. My object, of course, is a purely medical one in this case. The laudanum must find the process of digestion, as nearly as may be, where the laudanum found it last year.

At a reasonable time after dinner, I propose to lead the conversation back again—as inartificially as I can—to the subject of the Diamond, and of the Indian conspiracy to steal it. When I have filled his mind with these topics, I shall have done all that it is in my power to do, before the time comes for giving him the second dose.

* * * * *

Half past eight.—I have only this moment found an opportunity of attending to the most

important duty of all; the duty of looking in the family medicine chest, for the laudanum which Mr. Candy used last year.

Ten minutes since, I caught Betteredge at an unoccupied moment, and told him what I wanted. Without a word of objection, without so much as an attempt to produce his pocket-book, he led the way (making allowances for me at every step) to the store-room in which the medicine chest was kept.

I found the bottle, carefully guarded by a glass stopper tied over with leather. The preparation of opium which it contained was, as I had anticipated, the common Tincture of laudanum. Finding the bottle still well filled, I have resolved to use it, in preference to employing either of the two preparations with which I had taken care to provide myself, in case of emergency.

The question of the quantity which I am to administer, presents certain difficulties. I have thought it over, and have decided on increasing the dose.

My notes inform me that Mr. Candy only administered twenty-five minims. This is a small dose to have produced the results which followed—even in the case of a person so sensitive as Mr. Blake. I think it highly probable that Mr. Candy gave more than he supposed himself to have given—knowing, as I do, that he has a keen relish of the pleasures of the table, and that he measured out the laudanum on the birthday, after dinner. In any case, I shall run the risk of enlarging the dose to forty minims. On this occasion, Mr. Blake knows beforehand that he is going to take the laudanum — which is equivalent, physiologically speaking, to his having (unconsciously to himself) a certain capacity in him to resist the effects. If my view is right, a larger quantity is therefore imperatively required, this time, to repeat the results which the smaller quantity produced, last year.

* * * * *

Ten o'clock.—The witnesses, or the company (which shall I call them?) reached the house an hour since.

A little before nine o'clock, I prevailed on Mr. Blake to accompany me to his bedroom; stating, as a reason, that I wished him to look round it, for the last time, in order to make quite sure that nothing had been forgotten in the refurnishing of the room. I had previously arranged with Betteredge, that the bedchamber prepared for Mr. Bruff should be the next room to Mr. Blake's, and that I should be informed of the lawyer's arrival by a knock at the door. Five minutes after the clock in the hall had struck nine, I heard the knock; and, going out immediately, met Mr. Bruff in the corridor.

My personal appearance (as usual) told against me. Mr. Bruff's distrust looked at me plainly enough out of Mr. Bruff's eyes. Being well used to producing this effect on strangers, I did not hesitate a moment in saying what I wanted to say, before the lawyer found his way into Mr. Blake's room.

"You have travelled here, I believe, in company with Mrs. Merridew and Miss Verinder?" I said.

"Yes," answered Mr. Bruff, as drily as might be.

"Miss Verinder has probably told you, that I wish her presence in the house (and Mrs. Merridew's presence of course), to be kept a secret from Mr. Blake, until my experiment on him has been tried first?"

"I know that I am to hold my tongue, sir!" said Mr. Bruff impatiently. "Being habitually silent on the subject of human folly, I am all the readier to keep my lips closed on this occasion. Does that satisfy you?"

I bowed, and left Betteredge to show him to his room. Betteredge gave me one look at parting, which said, as if in so many words, "You have caught a Tartar, Mr. Jennings—and the name of him is Bruff."

It was next necessary to get the meeting over with the two ladies. I descended the stairs —a little nervously, I confess—on my way to Miss Verinder's sitting-room.

The gardener's wife (charged with looking after the accommodation of the ladies) met me in the first floor corridor. This excellent woman treats me with an excessive civility, which is plainly the offspring of downright terror. She stares, trembles, and curtseys, whenever I speak to her. On my asking for Miss Verinder, she stared, trembled, and would no doubt have curtseyed next, if Miss Verinder herself had not cut that ceremony short, by suddenly opening her sitting-room door.

"Is that Mr. Jennings?" she asked.

Before I could answer, she came out eagerly to speak to me in the corridor. We met under the light of a lamp on a bracket. At the first sight of me, Miss Verinder stopped, and hesitated. She recovered herself instantly, coloured for a moment—and then, with a charming frankness, offered me her hand.

"I can't treat you like a stranger, Mr. Jennings," she said. "Oh, if you only knew how happy your letters have made me!"

She looked at my ugly wrinkled face, with a bright gratitude so new to me in *my* experience of my fellow-creatures, that I was at a loss how to answer her. Nothing had prepared me for her kindness and her beauty. The misery of many years has not hardened my heart, thank God. I was as awkward and as shy with her, as if I had been a lad in my teens.

"Where is he now?" she asked, giving free expression to her one dominant interest —the interest in Mr. Blake. "What is he doing? Has he spoken of me? Is he in good spirits? How does he bear the sight of the house, after what happened in it last year? When are you going to give him the laudanum? May I see you pour it out? I am so interested; I am so excited—I have ten thousand things to say to you, and they all crowd together so that I don't know what to say first. Do you wonder at the interest I take in this?"

"No," I said. "I venture to think that I thoroughly understand it."

She was far above the paltry affectation of being confused. She answered me as she might have answered a brother or a father.

"You have relieved me of indescribable wretchedness; you have given me a new life. How can I be ungrateful enough to have any concealments from *you?* I love him," she said simply, "I have loved him from first to last—even when I was wronging him in my own thoughts; even when I was saying the hardest and the cruellest words to him. Is there any excuse for me, in that? I hope there is—I am afraid it is the only excuse I have. When to-morrow comes, and he knows that I am in the house, do you think——?"

She stopped again, and looked at me very earnestly.

"When to-morrow comes," I said, "I think you have only to tell him what you have just told me."

Her face brightened; she came a step nearer to me. Her fingers trifled nervously with a flower which I had picked in the garden, and which I had put into the button-hole of my coat.

"You have seen a great deal of him lately," she said. "Have you, really and truly, seen *that?*"

"Really and truly," I answered. "I am quite certain of what will happen to-morrow. I wish I could feel as certain of what will happen to-night."

At that point in the conversation, we were interrupted by the appearance of Betteredge, with the tea-tray. He gave me another significant look as he passed on into the sitting-room. "Aye! aye! make your hay while the sun shines. The Tartar's up-stairs, Mr. Jennings—the Tartar's up-stairs!"

We followed him into the room. A little old lady, in a corner, very nicely dressed, and very deeply absorbed over a smart piece of embroidery, dropped her work in her lap, and uttered a faint little scream at the first sight of my gipsy complexion and my piebald hair.

"Mrs. Merridew," said Miss Verinder, "this is Mr. Jennings."

"I beg Mr. Jennings's pardon," said the old lady, looking at Miss Verinder, and speaking at *me.* "Railway travelling always makes me nervous. I am endeavouring to quiet my mind by occupying myself as usual. I don't know whether my embroidery is out of place, on this extraordinary occasion. If it interferes with Mr. Jennings's medical views, I shall be happy to put it away of course."

I hastened to sanction the presence of the embroidery, exactly as I had sanctioned the absence of the burst buzzard and the Cupid's wing. Mrs. Merridew made an effort—a grateful effort—to look at my hair. No! it was not to be done. Mrs. Merridew looked back again at Miss Verinder.

"If Mr. Jennings will permit me," pursued the old lady, "I should like to ask a favour. Mr. Jennings is about to try a scientific experiment to-night. I used to attend scientific experiments when I was a girl at school. They invariably ended in an explosion. If Mr. Jennings will be so very kind, I should like to be warned of the explosion this time. With a view to getting it over, if possible, before I go to bed."

I attempted to assure Mrs. Merridew that an explosion was not included in the programme on this occasion.

"No," said the old lady. "I am much obliged to Mr. Jennings—I am aware that he is only deceiving me for my own good. I prefer plain dealing. I am quite resigned to the explosion—but I *do* want to get it over, if possible, before I go to bed."

Here the door opened, and Mrs. Merridew uttered another little scream. The advent of the explosion? No: only the advent of Betteredge.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Jennings," said Betteredge, in his most elaborately confidential manner. "Mr. Franklin wishes to know where you are. Being under your orders to deceive him, in respect to the presence of my young lady in the house, I have said I don't know. That you will please to observe, was a lie. Having one foot already in the grave, sir, the fewer lies you expect me to tell, the more I shall be indebted to you, when my conscience pricks me and my time comes."

There was not a moment to be wasted on the purely speculative question of Betteredge's conscience. Mr. Blake might make his appearance in search of me, unless I went to him at once in his own room. Miss Verinder followed me out into the corridor.

"They seem to be in a conspiracy to persecute you," she said. "What does it mean?"

"Only the protest of the world, Miss Verinder—on a very small scale—against anything that is new."

"What are we to do with Mrs. Merridew?"

"Tell her the explosion will take place at nine to-morrow morning."

"So as to send her to bed?"

"Yes—so as to send her to bed."

Miss Verinder went back to the sitting-room, and I went upstairs to Mr. Blake.

To my surprise, I found him alone; restlessly pacing his room, and a little irritated at being left by himself.

"Where is Mr. Bruff?" I asked.

He pointed to the closed door of communication between the two rooms. Mr. Bruff had looked in on him, for a moment; had attempted to renew his protest against our proceedings; and had once more failed to produce the smallest impression on Mr. Blake. Upon this, the lawyer had taken refuge in a black leather bag, filled to bursting with professional papers. "The serious business of life," he admitted, "was sadly out of place on such an occasion as the present. But the serious business of life must be carried on, for all that. Mr. Blake would perhaps kindly make allowance for the old-fashioned habits of a practical man. Time was money—

and, as for Mr. Jennings, he might depend on it that Mr. Bruff would be forthcoming when called upon." With that apology, the lawyer had gone back to his own room, and had immersed himself obstinately in his black bag.

I thought of Mrs. Merridew and her embroidery, and of Betteredge and his conscience. There is a wonderful sameness in the solid side of the English character—just as there is a wonderful sameness in the solid expression of the English face.

"When are you going to give me the laudanum?" asked Mr. Blake impatiently.

"You must wait a little longer," I said. "I will stay and keep you company till the time comes."

It was then not ten o'clock. Inquiries which I had made, at various times, of Betteredge and Mr. Blake, had led me to the conclusion that the dose of laudanum given by Mr. Candy could not possibly have been administered before eleven. I had accordingly determined not to try the second dose until that time.

We talked a little; but both our minds were preoccupied by the coming ordeal. The conversation soon flagged—then dropped altogether. Mr. Blake idly turned over the books on his bedroom table. I had taken the precaution of looking at them, when we first entered the room. The Guardian; The Tatler; Richardson's Pamela, Mackenzie's Man of Feeling; Roscoe's Lorenzo de' Medici, and Robertson's Charles the Fifth—all classical works; all (of course) immeasurably superior to anything produced in later times; and all (from my present point of view) possessing the one great merit of enchaining nobody's interest, and exciting nobody's brain. I left Mr. Blake to the composing influence of Standard Literature, and occupied myself in making this entry in my journal.

My watch informs me that it is close on eleven o'clock. I must shut up these leaves once more.

* * * * *

Two o'clock A.M.—The experiment has been tried. With what result, I am now to describe.

At eleven o'clock, I rang the bell for Betteredge, and told Mr. Blake that he might at last prepare himself for bed.

I looked out of window at the night. It was mild and rainy, resembling, in this respect, the night of the birthday—the twenty-first of June, last year. Without professing to believe in omens, it was at least encouraging to find no direct nervous influences—no stormy or electric perturbations—in the atmosphere. Betteredge joined me at the window, and mysteriously put a little slip of paper into my hand. It contained these lines:

"Mrs. Merridew has gone to bed, on the distinct understanding that the explosion is to take place at nine to-morrow morning, and that I am not to stir out of this part of the house until she comes and sets me free. She has no idea that the chief scene of the experiment is my sitting-room—or she would have remained in it for the whole night! I am alone, and very anxious. Pray let me see you measure out the laudanum; I want to have something to do with it, even in the unimportant character of a mere looker-on.—R. V."

I followed Betteredge out of the room, and told him to remove the medicine-chest into Miss Verinder's sitting-room.

The order appeared to take him completely by surprise. He looked as if he suspected me of some occult medical design on Miss Verinder! "Might I presume to ask," he said, "what my young lady and the medicine chest have got to do with each other?"

"Stay in the sitting-room, and you will see."

Betteredge appeared to doubt his own unaided capacity to superintend me effectually, on an occasion when a medicine-chest was included in the proceedings.

"Is there any objection, sir," he asked, "to taking Mr. Bruff into this part of the business?"

"Quite the contrary! I am now going to ask Mr. Bruff to accompany me down-stairs."

Betteredge withdrew to fetch the medicine-chest, without another word. I went back into Mr. Blake's room, and knocked at the door of communication. Mr. Bruff opened it, with his papers in his hand—immersed in Law; impenetrable to Medicine.

"I am sorry to disturb you," I said. "But I am going to prepare the laudanum for Mr. Blake; and I must request you to be present, and to see what I do."

"Yes?" said Mr. Bruff, with nine-tenths of his attention rivetted on his papers, and with one-tenth unwillingly accorded to me. "Anything else?"

"I must trouble you to return here with me, and to see me administer the dose."

"Anything else?"

"One thing more. I must put you to the inconvenience of remaining in Mr. Blake's room, and of waiting to see what happens."

"Oh, very good!" said Mr. Bruff. "My room, or Mr. Blake's room—it doesn't matter which; I can go on with my papers anywhere. Unless you object, Mr. Jennings, to my importing *that* amount of common sense into the proceedings?"

Before I could answer, Mr. Blake addressed himself to the lawyer, speaking from his bed.

"Do you really mean to say that you don't feel any interest in what we are going to do?" he asked. "Mr. Bruff, you have no more imagination than a cow!"

"A cow is a very useful animal, Mr. Blake," said the lawyer. With that reply, he followed me out of the room, still keeping his papers in his hand.

We found Miss Verinder, pale and agitated, restlessly pacing her sitting-room from end to end. At a table in a corner, stood Betteredge, on guard over the medicine chest. Mr. Bruff sat down on the first chair that he could find, and (emulating the usefulness of the cow) plunged back again into his papers on the spot.

Miss Verinder drew me aside, and reverted instantly to her one all-absorbing interest—the interest in Mr. Blake.

"How is he now?" she asked. "Is he nervous? is he out of temper? Do you think it will succeed? Are you sure it will do no harm?"

"Quite sure. Come, and see me measure it out."

"One moment! It is past eleven now. How long will it be before anything happens?"

"It is not easy to say. An hour perhaps."

"I suppose the room must be dark, as it was last year?"

"Certainly."

"I shall wait in my bedroom—just as I did before. I shall keep the door a little way open. It was a little way open last year. I will watch the sitting-room door; and the moment it moves, I will blow out my light. It all happened in that way, on my birthday night. And it must all happen again in the same way, mustn't it?"

"Are you sure you can control yourself, Miss Verinder?"

"In *his* interests, I can do anything!" she answered fervently.

One look at her face told me that I could trust her. I addressed myself again to Mr. Bruff.

"I must trouble you to put your papers aside for a moment," I said.

"Oh, certainly!" He got up with a start—as if I had disturbed him at a particularly interesting place—and followed me to the medicine chest. There, deprived of the breathless excitement incidental to the practice of his profession, he looked at Betteredge—and yawned wearily.

Miss Verinder joined me with a glass jug of cold water, which she had taken from a side-table. "Let me pour out the water," she whispered. "I *must* have a hand in it!"

I measured out the forty minims from the bottle, and poured the laudanum into a medicine glass. "Fill it till it is three parts full," I said, and handed the glass to Miss Verinder. I then directed Betteredge to lock up the medicine-chest; informing him that I had done with it now. A look of unutterable relief overspread the old servant's countenance. He had evidently suspected me of a medical design on his young lady!

After adding the water as I had directed, Miss Verinder seized a moment—while Betteredge was locking the chest, and while Mr. Bruff was looking back at his papers—and slily kissed the rim of the medicine glass. "When you give it to him," whispered the charming girl, "give it to him on that side!"

I took the piece of crystal which was to represent the Diamond from my pocket, and gave it to her.

"You must have a hand in this, too," I said. "You must put it where you put the Moonstone last year."

She led the way to the Indian cabinet, and put the mock Diamond into the drawer which the real Diamond had occupied on the birthday night. Mr. Bruff witnessed this proceeding, under protest, as he had witnessed everything else. But the strong dramatic interest which the experiment was now assuming, proved (to my great amusement) to be too much for Betteredge's capacity of self-restraint. His hand trembled as he held the candle, and he whispered anxiously, "Are you sure, miss, it's the right drawer?"

I led the way out again, with the laudanum and water in my hand. At the door, I stopped to address a last word to Miss Verinder.

"Don't be long in putting out the lights," I said.

"I will put them out at once," she answered. "And I will wait in my bedroom, with only one candle alight."

She closed the sitting-room door behind us. Followed by Mr. Bruff and Betteredge, I went back to Mr. Blake's room.

We found him moving restlessly from side to side of the bed, and wondering irritably whether he was to have the laudanum that night. In the presence of the two witnesses, I gave him the dose, and shook up his pillows, and told him to lie down again quietly and wait.

His bed, provided with light chintz curtains, was placed, with the head against the wall of the room, so as to leave a good open space on either side of it. On one side, I drew the curtains completely—and in the part of the room thus screened from his view, I placed Mr. Bruff and Betteredge, to wait for the result. At the bottom of the bed, I half drew the curtains—and placed my own chair at a little distance, so that I might let him see me or not see me, speak to me or not speak to me, just as the circumstances might direct. Having already been informed that he always slept with a light in the room, I placed one of the two lighted candles on a little table at the head of the bed, where the glare of the light would not strike on his eyes. The other candle I gave to Mr. Bruff; the light, in this instance, being subdued by the screen of the chintz curtains. The window was open at the top so as to ventilate the room. The rain fell softly, the house was quiet. It was twenty minutes past eleven, by my watch, when the preparations were completed, and I took my place on the chair set apart at the bottom of the bed.

Mr. Bruff resumed his papers, with every appearance of being as deeply interested in them as ever. But looking towards him now, I saw certain signs and tokens which told me that the Law was beginning to lose its hold on him at last. The suspended interest of the situation in which we were now placed, was slowly asserting its influence even on *his* unimaginative mind. As for Betteredge, consistency of principle and dignity of conduct had become, in his case, mere empty words. He forgot that I was performing a conjuring trick on Mr. Franklin Blake; he forgot that I had upset the house from top to bottom; he forgot that I

had not read Robinson Crusoe since I was a child. "For the Lord's sake, sir," he whispered to me, "tell us when it will begin to work."

"Not before midnight," I whispered back. "Say nothing, and sit still."

Betteredge dropped to the lowest depth of familiarity with me, without a struggle to save himself. He answered me by a wink!

Looking next towards Mr. Blake, I found him as restless as ever in his bed; fretfully wondering why the influence of the laudanum had not begun to assert itself yet. To tell him, in his present humour, that the more he fidgetted and wondered, the longer he would delay the result for which we were now waiting, would have been simply useless. The wiser course to take was to dismiss the idea of the opium from his mind, by leading him insensibly to think of something else.

With this view, I encouraged him to talk to me; contriving so to direct the conversation, on my side, as to lead it back again to the subject which had engaged us earlier in the evening—the subject of the Diamond. I took care to revert to those portions of the story of the Moonstone, which related to the transport of it from London to Yorkshire; to the risk which Mr. Blake had run in removing it from the bank at Frizinghall; and to the unexpected appearance of the Indians at the house, on the evening of the birthday. And I purposely assumed, in referring to these events, to have misunderstood much of what Mr. Blake himself had told me a few hours since. In this way, I set him talking on the subject with which it was now vitally important to fill his mind—without allowing him to suspect that I was making him talk for a purpose. Little by little, he became so interested in putting me right that he forgot to fidget in the bed. His mind was far away from the question of the opium, at the all-important time when his eyes first told me that the opium was beginning to lay its hold on his brain.

I looked at my watch. It wanted five minutes to twelve, when the premonitory symptoms of the working of the laudanum first showed themselves to me.

At this time, no unpractised eyes would have detected any change in him. But, as the minutes of the new morning wore away, the swiftly-subtle progress of the influence began to show itself more plainly. The sublime intoxication of opium gleamed in his eyes; the dew of a stealthy perspiration began to glisten on his face. In five minutes more, the talk which he still kept up with me, failed in coherence. He held steadily to the subject of the Diamond; but he ceased to complete his sentences. A little later, the sentences dropped to single words. Then, there was an interval of silence. Then, he sat up in bed. Then, still busy with the subject of the Diamond, he began to talk again—not to me, but to himself. That change told me that the first stage in the experiment was reached. The stimulant influence of the opium had got him.

The time, now, was twenty-three minutes past twelve. The next half hour, at most, would decide the question of whether he would, or would not, get up from his bed, and leave the room.

In the breathless interest of watching him—in the unutterable triumph of seeing the first result of the experiment declare itself in the manner, and nearly at the time, which I had anticipated—I had utterly forgotten the two companions of my night vigil. Looking towards them now, I saw the Law (as represented by Mr. Bruff's papers) lying unheeded on the floor. Mr. Bruff himself was looking eagerly through a crevice left in the imperfectly-drawn curtains of the bed. And Betteredge, oblivious of all respect for social distinctions, was peeping over Mr. Bruff's shoulder.

They both started back, on finding that I was looking at them, like two boys caught out by their schoolmaster in a fault. I signed to them to take off their boots quietly, as I was taking off mine. If Mr. Blake gave us the chance of following him, it was vitally necessary to follow him without noise.

Ten minutes passed—and nothing happened. Then, he suddenly threw the bed clothes off him. He put one leg out of bed. He waited.

"I wish I had never taken it out of the bank," he said to himself. "It was safe in the bank."

My heart throbbed fast; the pulses at my temples beat furiously. The doubt about the safety of the Diamond was, once more, the dominant impression in his brain! On that one pivot, the whole success of the experiment turned. The prospect thus suddenly opened before me, was too much for my shattered nerves. I was obliged to look away from him—or I should have lost my self-control.

There was another interval of silence.

When I could trust myself to look back at him, he was out of his bed, standing erect at the side of it. The pupils of his eyes were now contracted; his eyeballs gleamed in the light of the candle as he moved his head slowly to and fro. He was thinking; he was doubting—he spoke again.

"How do I know?" he said. "The Indians may be hidden in the house?"

He stopped, and walked slowly to the other end of the room. He turned—waited—came back to the bed.

"It's not even locked up," he went on. "It's in the drawer of her cabinet. And the drawer doesn't lock."

He sat down on the side of the bed. "Anybody might take it," he said.

He rose again restlessly, and reiterated his first words.

"How do I know? The Indians may be hidden in the house."

He waited again. I drew back behind the half curtain of the bed. He looked about the room, with the vacant glitter in his eyes. It was a breathless moment. There was a pause of some sort. A pause in the action of the

opium? a pause in the action of the brain? Who could tell? Everything depended, now, on what he did next.

He laid himself down again on the bed!

A horrible doubt crossed my mind. Was it possible that the sedative action of the opium was making itself felt already? It was not in my experience that it should do this. But what is experience, where opium is concerned? There are probably no two men in existence on whom the drug acts in exactly the same manner. Was some constitutional peculiarity in him, feeling the influence in some new way? Were we to fail, on the very brink of success?

No! He got up again abruptly. "How the devil am I to sleep," he said, "with *this* on my mind?"

He looked at the light, burning on the table at the head of his bed. After a moment, he took the candle in his hand.

I blew out the second candle, burning behind the closed curtains. I drew back, with Mr. Bruff and Betteredge, into the farthest corner by the bed. I signed to them to be silent, as if their lives had depended on it.

We waited—seeing and hearing nothing. We waited, hidden from him by the curtains.

The light which he was holding on the other side of us, moved suddenly. The next moment, he passed us, swift and noiseless, with the candle in his hand.

He opened the bedroom door, and went out.

We followed him, along the corridor. We followed him down the stairs. We followed him along the second corridor. He never looked back; he never hesitated.

He opened the sitting-room door, and went in, leaving it open behind him.

The door was hung (like all the other doors in the house) on large old-fashioned hinges. When it was opened, a crevice was opened between the door and the post. I signed to my two companions to look through this, so as to keep them from showing themselves. I placed myself—outside the door also—on the opposite side. A recess in the wall was at my left hand, in which I could instantly hide myself, if he showed any signs of looking back into the corridor.

He advanced to the middle of the room, with the candle still in his hand: he looked about him—but he never looked back.

I saw the door of Miss Verinder's bedroom, standing ajar. She had put out her light. She controlled herself nobly. The dim white outline of her summer dress was all that I could see. Nobody who had not known it beforehand, would have suspected that there was a living creature in the room. She kept back, in the dark: not a word, not a movement escaped her.

It was now ten minutes past one. I heard, through the dead silence, the soft drip of the rain, and the tremulous passage of the night air through the trees.

After waiting irresolute, for a minute or more, in the middle of the room, he moved to the corner near the window, where the Indian cabinet stood.

He put his candle on the top of the cabinet. He opened, and shut, one drawer after another, until he came to the drawer in which the mock Diamond was put. He looked into the drawer for a moment. Then, he took the mock Diamond out with his right hand. With the other hand, he took the candle from the top of the cabinet.

He walked back a few steps towards the middle of the room, and stood still again.

Thus far, he had exactly repeated what he had done on the birthday night. Would his next proceeding be the same as the proceeding of last year? Would he leave the room? Would he go back now, as I believed he had gone back then, to his bedchamber? Would he show us what he had done with the Diamond, when he had returned to his own room?

His first action, when he moved once more, proved to be an action which he had *not* performed, when he was under the influence of the opium for the first time. He put the candle down on a table, and wandered on a little towards the farther end of the room. There was a sofa here. He leaned heavily on the back of it, with his left hand—then roused himself, and returned to the middle of the room. I could now see his eyes. They were getting dull and heavy; the glitter in them was fast dying out.

The suspense of the moment proved too much for Miss Verinder's self-control. She advanced a few steps—then stopped again. Mr. Bruff and Betteredge looked across the open doorway at me for the first time. The prevision of a coming disappointment was impressing itself on their minds as well as on mine.

Still, so long as he stood where he was, there was hope. We waited, in unutterable expectation, to see what would happen next.

The next event was decisive. He let the mock Diamond drop out of his hand.

It fell on the floor, before the doorway—plainly visible to him, and to every one. He made no effort to pick it up: he looked down at it vacantly, and, as he looked, his head sank on his breast. He staggered—roused himself for an instant—walked back unsteadily to the sofa—and sat down on it. He made a last effort; he tried to rise, and sank back. His head fell on the sofa cushions. It was then twenty-five minutes past one o'clock. Before I had put my watch back in my pocket, he was asleep.

It was all over now. The sedative influence had got him; the experiment was at an end.

I entered the room, telling Mr. Bruff and Betteredge that they might follow me. There was no fear of disturbing him. We were free to move and speak.

"The first thing to settle," I said, "is the question of what we are to do with him. He will probably sleep for the next six or seven hours, at least. It is some distance to carry

him back to his own room. When I was younger, I could have done it alone. But my health and strength are not what they were—I am afraid I must ask you to help me."

Before they could answer, Miss Verinder called to me softly. She met me at the door of her room, with a light shawl, and with the counterpane from her own bed.

"Do you mean to watch him, while he sleeps?" she asked.

"Yes. I am not sure enough of the action of the opium, in his case, to be willing to leave him alone."

She handed me the shawl and the counterpane.

"Why should you disturb him?" she whispered. "Make his bed on the sofa. I can shut my door, and keep in my room."

It was infinitely the simplest and the safest way of disposing of him for the night. I mentioned the suggestion to Mr. Bruff and Betteredge—who both approved of my adopting it. In five minutes, I had laid him comfortably on the sofa, and had covered him lightly with the counterpane and the shawl. Miss Verinder wished us good night, and closed the door. At my request, we three then drew round the table in the middle of the room, on which the candle was still burning, and on which writing materials were placed.

"Before we separate," I began, "I have a word to say about the experiment which has been tried to-night. Two distinct objects were to be gained by it. The first of these objects was to prove, that Mr. Blake entered this room, and took the Diamond, last year, acting unconsciously and irresponsibly, under the influence of opium. After what you have both seen, are you both satisfied, so far?"

They answered me in the affirmative, without a moment's hesitation.

"The second object," I went on, "was to discover what he did with the Diamond, after he was seen by Miss Verinder to leave her sitting-room with the jewel in his hand, on the birthday night. The gaining of this object depended, of course, on his still continuing exactly to repeat his proceedings of last year. He has failed to do that; and the purpose of the experiment is defeated accordingly. I can't assert that I am not disappointed at the result—but I can honestly say that I am not surprised by it. I told Mr. Blake from the first, that our complete success in this matter, depended on our completely reproducing in him the physical and moral conditions of last year—and I warned him that this was the next thing to a downright impossibility. We have only partially reproduced the conditions, and the experiment has been only partially successful in consequence. It is also possible that I may have administered too large a dose of laudanum. But I myself look upon the first reason that I have given, as the true reason why we have to lament a failure, as well as to rejoice over a success."

After saying those words, I put the writing materials before Mr. Bruff, and asked him if he had any objection—before we separated for the night—to draw out, and sign, a plain statement of what he had seen. He at once took the pen, and produced the statement with the fluent readiness of a practised hand.

"I owe you this," he said, signing the paper, "as some atonement for what passed between us earlier in the evening. I beg your pardon, Mr. Jennings, for having doubted you. You have done Franklin Blake an inestimable service. In our legal phrase, you have proved your case."

Betteredge's apology was characteristic of the man.

"Mr. Jennings," he said, "when you read Robinson Crusoe again (which I strongly recommend you to do), you will find that he never scruples to acknowledge it, when he turns out to have been in the wrong. Please to consider me, sir, as doing what Robinson Crusoe did, on the present occasion." With those words he signed the paper in his turn.

Mr. Bruff took me aside, as we rose from the table.

"One word about the Diamond," he said. "Your theory is that Franklin Blake hid the Moonstone in his room. My theory is, that the Moonstone is in the possession of Mr. Luker's bankers in London. We won't dispute which of us is right. We will only ask, which of us is in a position to put his theory to the test first."

"The test, in my case," I answered, "has been tried to-night, and has failed."

"The test, in my case," rejoined Mr. Bruff, "is still in process of trial. For the last two days, I have had a watch set for Mr. Luker at the bank; and I shall cause that watch to be continued until the last day of the month. I know that he must take the Diamond himself out of his bankers' hands—and I am acting on the chance that the person who has pledged the Diamond may force him to do this, by redeeming the pledge. In that case, I may be able to lay my hand on the person. And there is a prospect of our clearing up the mystery, exactly at the point where the mystery baffles us now! Do you admit that, so far?"

I admitted it readily.

"I am going back to town by the ten o'clock train," pursued the lawyer. "I may hear, when I get back, that a discovery has been made—and it may be of the greatest importance that I should have Franklin Blake at hand to appeal to, if necessary. I intend to tell him, as soon as he wakes, that he must return with me to London. After all that has happened, may I trust to your influence to back me?"

"Certainly!" I said.

Mr. Bruff shook hands with me, and left the room. Betteredge followed him out.

I went to the sofa to look at Mr. Blake. He had not moved since I had laid him down and made his bed—he lay locked in a deep and quiet sleep.

While I was still looking at him, I heard the

bedroom door softly opened. Once more, Miss Verinder appeared on the threshold, in her pretty summer dress.

"Do me a last favour," she whispered. "Let me watch him with you."

I hesitated—not in the interests of propriety; only in the interest of her night's rest. She came close to me, and took my hand.

"I can't sleep; I can't even sit still, in my own room," she said. "Oh, Mr. Jennings, if you were me, only think how you would long to sit and look at him. Say, yes! Do!"

Is it necessary to mention that I gave way? Surely not!

She drew a chair to the foot of the sofa. She looked at him, in a silent ecstasy of happiness, till the tears rose in her eyes. She dried her eyes, and said she would fetch her work. She fetched her work, and never did a single stitch of it. It lay in her lap—she was not even able to look away from him long enough to thread her needle. I thought of my own youth; I thought of the gentle eyes which had once looked love at *me*. In the heaviness of my heart, I turned to my Journal for relief, and wrote in it what is written here.

So we kept our watch together in silence. One of us absorbed in his writing; the other absorbed in her love.

Hour after hour, he lay in his deep sleep. The light of the new day grew and grew in the room, and still he never moved.

Towards six o'clock, I felt the warning which told me that my pains were coming back. I was obliged to leave her alone with him for a little while. I said I would go up-stairs, and fetch another pillow for him out of his room. It was not a long attack, this time. In a little while, I was able to venture back and let her see me again.

I found her at the head of the sofa, when I returned. She was just touching his forehead with her lips. I shook my head as soberly as I could, and pointed to her chair. She looked back at me with a bright smile, and a charming colour in her face. "You would have done it," she whispered, "in my place!"

* * * * *

It is just eight o'clock. He is beginning to move for the first time.

Miss Verinder is kneeling by the side of the sofa. She has so placed herself that when his eyes first open, they must open on her face.

Shall I leave them together?

Yes!

* * * * *

Eleven o'clock.—They have arranged it among themselves; they have all gone to London by the ten o'clock train. My brief dream of happiness is over. I have awakened again to the realities of my friendless and lonely life.

I dare not trust myself to write down the kind words that have been said to me—especially by Miss Verinder and Mr. Blake. Besides, it is needless. Those words will come back to me in my solitary hours, and will help me through what is left of the end of my life. Mr. Blake is to write, and tell me what happens in London. Miss Verinder is to return to Yorkshire in the autumn (for her marriage, no doubt); and I am to take a holiday, and be a guest in the house. Oh me, how I felt it, as the grateful happiness looked at me out of her eyes, and the warm pressure of her hand said, "This is your doing!"

My poor patients are waiting for me. Back again, this morning, to the old routine! Back again, to-night, to the dreadful alternative between the opium and the pain!

God be praised for his mercy! I have seen a little sunshine—I have had a happy time.

LEAVES FROM THE MAHOGANY TREE.

A CUP OF TEA.

A CUP of tea! Blessings on the words, for they convey a sense of English home comfort, of which the proud Gaul, with all his boulevards and battalions, is as ignorant as a turbot is of the use of the piano. What refinement or gentleness could there have been in those times when our rude ancestors in the peascod doublets and trunk hose and our rugged ancestress in the wheel ruff and farthingale sat down to breakfast over a quart of humming ale or a silver tankard of Canary?

There was no pleasant tea-table for Shakespeare to talk wisely at, no cup of fragrant Souchong for Spenser to recite poetry over. No wonder that wise men then ignored the fairer sex, shrank from the bottle, and got together in taverns where wit might lighten and wisdom thunder. Lucky Milton—lucky because he over smoking Bohea no doubt saw visions of the golden gates of Paradise and the amaranthine meadows of Eden. But seriously, has not tea ministered vastly to our tranquil home pleasures and calm home life, and was it not a kindly providence that raised the tea-cup to our tired lips just as our City life grew more busy and more sedentary? Happy the brave brain-workers who were born after the coming in of the sweet herb of China!

It was for a long time supposed that the use of tea began in Tartary, and was not introduced into China till the empire was conquered by the Tartars, ten years before the Restoration of Charles the Second; but this is entirely an error, as Bontius, a Leyden professor, who flourished in the reign of James the First, mentions the general use of tea by the Chinese twenty years before the Tartars clambered over the Great Wall or marched past the great blue-tiled Pagodas.

The Chinese have two curious old legends, which are worth repeating, as first contributions to the mythology of the teapot.

The first relates to the Origin of the Tea-plant.

Darma, a very religious prince, son of Kasinwo, an Indian king, and the twenty-eighth descendant of Tiaka, a negro monarch

(1023 B.C.), landed in China in the year A.D. 510. Probably a Brahmin or a Buddhist of great austerity, he employed all his care to diffuse a sense of religion, and for this purpose denied himself rest, sleep, and relaxation. He lived in the open air, and devoted himself day and night to prayer and contemplation of the nature and benificence of God, aiming at eventual absorption into the Divine Essence when purified by long prayer, fast, and vigil. Flesh is flesh, however. After several years, worn out by want of food and sleep, Darma the great and good involuntarily closed his eyes, and after that slept soundly, reckless of anything but rest. Before dawn he awoke, full of sorrow and despair at having thus broken his vow, snatched up a knife and cut off both his offending eyelids. When it grew light, he discovered that two beautiful shrubs had grown from them, and eating some of the leaves, he was presently filled with new joy, courage, and strength to pursue his holy meditations. The new plant was the tea plant, and Darma recommended the use of it to his disciples and followers. Kempfer gives a portrait of this Chinese and Japanese saint, at whose feet there is always a reed to indicate that he had traversed seas and rivers, and had come from afar.

The legend seems to prove that from the earliest times tea was known among students and austere people as a dispeller of drowsiness. Its first use was no doubt accidental, as was that of coffee, the virtues of which, the Arab legend says, were discovered by some goats who had browsed on leaves of the coffee plant, and became unusually lively after their meal. It is a singular fact, too, that Jesuit writers who visited China in the reign of James the First expressly state that they used the herb tea common among the Chinese, and found that it kept their eyes open and lessened the fatigue of writing sermons and hearing absolutions that lasted late into the night. No doubt the figure of Darma and his reed could be found on old China.

Our second Boheatic Myth is a legend about Old China.

The island of Mauvi, now sunk deep in the sea near the island of Formosa, was once wealthy and flourishing, and its silken-clad pigtailed people made the richest and finest porcelain in the world. The King of Mauvi, being a pious man, was warned in a dream by the gods, that when the faces of two of the people's most famous idols grew red, the island would suddenly be destroyed, for the great wickedness of its inhabitants (who were probably tea-merchants, i.e., tea-adulteraters). Two very sharp villains, hearing of this dream, went in the night and at once incontinently painted both the images a bright red, with a dash or two of pea-green, upon which the king, without due inquiry (though he proved right in the end) instantly took ship, and started for the south of China. As soon as he was gone, the island settled down, with the two rascals, the tea-merchants, and all the porcelain. There can be no doubt about the story, for the tops of the highest rocks of Mauvi are still visible at low water; and moreover, if any further proof was needed, divers often venture down into the blue depths, when the sharks are asleep above in the sun, and recover old teapots, shaped like small barrels, with short narrow necks, and of a greenish-white colour. They used to be worth about seven thousand pounds apiece when cracked, and fissured, and having shells sticking to them. An old Dutch writer computes the price of the large and sound at five thousand thails. Now, a thail is ten silver maas, and ten maas are equal to seventy Dutch stivers, and twelve stivers are worth thirteenpence of our currency, and all that makes a heap of money.

Many antiquarians (but not Dreikopf—oh, no, no!) are of opinion that the Arabian Malobathron—mentioned by the writer of the Periplus (or first survey) of the Black Sea, supposed to be Arrian, the learned preceptor of Marcus Antoninus—is tea, as the golden fleece is thought to be silk, and the Spartans' black broth coffee; but we do not hold to this belief, for, as Dreikopf knows, and Horace shows, people put malobathron on their hair, not in their stomachs. Ramusio, a Venetian writer on geography, who died in 1557, mentions tea; and so does Giovanni Botero, who, in 1589, particularly praises tea as a "delicate juice which takes the place of wine, and is good for health and sobriety;" so also does Olearius, whom the Duke of Holstein sent to Russia and Persia. Gerard Bontius, a Leyden professor, who invented diabolical Pills known as "Tartarean," and went to China in 1648, gave a drawing of the plant. We hear of tea in Europe in 1557 (the last year of the reign of Queen Mary), and yet it was not till 1660 (the year of the Restoration) that we find tea in pretty free use in England.

In 1660 (12 Carl. 2, c. 23) a duty of eightpence a gallon was laid on all tea sold and made in coffee-houses (started in London by Pasqua Rosee, 1652). The tax-collectors visited the houses daily, to ascertain what quantity of tea had been made in the day. That same year Thomas Garraway, landlord of Garraway's Coffee House, near the Royal Exchange, started as "tobacconist, and seller and retailer of tea and coffee." "That the virtues and excellencies of this leaf and drink," said Garraway in a circular, "are many and great, is evident and manifest by the high esteem and use of it (especially of late years) among the physicians and knowing men of France, Italy, Holland, and other parts of Christendom; in England it hath been sold in the leaf for six pounds, and sometimes for ten pounds, the pound weight; and in respect of its former scarceness and dearness, it hath been only used as a regalia in high treatments and entertainments, and presents made thereof to princes and grandees, till the year 1657. The said Thomas Garraway did purchase a quantity thereof, and first publicly sold the said tea in

leaf and drink made according to the directions of the most knowing merchants and travellers in those eastern countries, and upon knowledge and experience of the said Garraway's continued care and industry in obtaining the best tea, and making the best tea, and making drink thereof, very many noblemen, physicians, and merchants, and gentlemen of quality, have ever since sent to him for the said leaf, and daily resort to his house in Exchange Alley aforesaid, and drink *the drink thereof;* and to this intent, &c., these are to give notice that the said Thomas hath tea to sell from sixteen to fifty shillings the pound." Fifty shillings the pound, forsooth; and now we get good Souchong, that deadly enemy to beer and wine, at three shillings a pound.

Soon after this Pepys, that rarest of gossips, whose curiosity for novelties was insatiable, mentions tasting tea in September, 1660. "Tea—a Chinese drink, of which I had never drank before." But it does not seem to have made much impression on the worthy admiralty clerk, for in 1667, he says again, "Came in and found my wife making tea, a new drink which is said to be good for her cold and defluxions." The Earl of Clarendon, that grand party historian, writes in his diary, "Père Couplet dined with me, and after supper we had tea; which he said was really as good as any he had drank in China." Sir Kenelm Digby mentions with great emotion a way of preparing tea used by the Jesuits when coming in tired and waiting for a meal.

"The priest that came from China," he says "told Mr. Waller that to a pint of tea they frequently take the yolks of two new-laid eggs, and beat them up with as much fine sugar as is sufficient for the tea, and stir all well together. The water must remain upon the tea no longer than while you can say the Miserere psalm very leisurely, you have then only the spiritual part of the tea, the proportion of which to the water must be about a drachm to a pint."

In 1688 the Court of Directors, writing to their factory agents at Bantam, in Java, ordered them to send back home one hundred pounds weight of the best tea they could get, and the next year there arrived their first consignment of tea, in two canisters of one hundred and forty-three pounds and a half each. The directors had previously presented Charles's Portuguese queen, who had learnt to like the Chinese beverage at home, on the shores of the Tagus, with twenty-two pounds of tea on her birthday. It was on this presentation that courtly Waller wrote his verses:

Venus her Myrtle, Phœbus has his Bays,
Tea both excels, which she vouchsafes to praise;
The best of queens and best of herbs we owe
To that bold nation which the way did show
To the first region where the sun doth rise,
Whose rich productions we so justly prize.
The muse's friend, tea, doth our fancy aid,
Repress those vapours which the head invade,
And keeps that palace of the soul serene,
Fit on her birthday to salute the queen.

Nicholas Tulp, the same eminent Professor of Amsterdam, whom Rembrandt painted with his pupils gathered round him over the dissecting-table, had already, about 1670, written on tea, and collected opinions of eminent physicians on the subject of the new liquor. But in 1671 tea found a champion, indeed, in Cornelius Bontekoe, a Leyden doctor, who upheld the chemical theory of Dubois, and considered tea a panacea against all the ills that flesh is heir to. He pronounced it an infallible cause of health, and thought two hundred cups daily not too much even for a moderate drinker. The Dutch East India Company is said to have made it worth his while to uphold this opinion.

By Queen Anne's time tea had come into full use, and tea parties were much what they are now; indeed, there is now to be seen at Leeds a picture painted before 1681, which represents a tea party which strictly resembles one at the present day, except that the kettle stands by the side of the lady on a sort of tripod stove.

In 1763, Linnæus had the satisfaction of receiving a living tea-plant from China. He seems to have believed it possible to grow tea in Europe, for he says he looked upon nothing to be of more importance than to shut the gate through which so much silver went out of Europe. In the time of the amiable Lettsom, who died in 1815,

And if they dies, I Lett's-em—

tea-plants were introduced into England, and they are now common in our conservatories. The plant resembles a camellia. In France, at one time, hopes were entertained of being able to prepare the leaves for sale, but the scheme was soon abandoned.

It must not be supposed that this Chinese stranger forced his way to our tables without opposition from the timid, the prejudiced, and the interested. Hundreds of rival herbs and spices were tried as the basis of refreshing beverages. Medical men have gone alternately mad after sage, marjoram, the Arctic bramble, the sloe, goat-weed, Mexican goosefoot, speedwell, wild geranium, veronica, wormwood, juniper, saffron, carduus benedictus, trefoil, wood-sorrel, pepper, mace, scurvy-grass, plantain, and betony. Sir Hans Sloane invented a herb-tea, and Dr. Solander (Captain Cook's companion) another, but nothing has displaced the Chinese leaf sprung from the eyelids of King Darma.

Cowper (circa 1782) did much in one of his poems to associate tea with home comfort, and to sanctify it with memories of domestic happiness; what a pleasant interior he paints with the firelight pulsing on the ceiling:

"Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,
Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,
And while the bubbling and loud-hissing urn
Throws up a steamy column, and the cups
That cheer, but not inebriate, wait on each,
To let us welcome peaceful evening in."

We do not exactly know at what date the urn, "the offspring of idleness," as it has been

somewhat metaphorically called, drove "the old national kettle, the pride of the fireside," into the kitchen. Nor do we know whether the English urn of classical shape is an imitation of the Russian samovar, which is not heated by a concealed iron, but by a small fire of red hot charcoal, far more efficacious. The urn is an imposing and pleasant summer friend, but is not nearly so useful as it is ornamental. Yet it is a pleasure to see him in the hands of a neat handed Phyllis, thumping, hissing, and throbbing like a little undeveloped locomotive, the whiff of white steam waving like a thin plume from his bronze crest; but when his youthful ardour dies away, and one or two faint sighs are symptoms of the gradual declining of the heat, the result upon the second cup of tea is certainly most deplorable.

How pleasant to revive recollections of pleasant tea-times long since passed! The meal (generally after a late dinner rather a work of supererogation) used to begin, as far back as we can remember, with a jangle and clatter of spoons and cups, and a stirring of restless saucers in the neighbourhood of the kitchen. We younkers, stirred by the sound, roused ourselves for the impending meal. The tea-tray would at last appear borne in by Susan (we are recalling an especial period of youth), the palladium of the family (the silver tea-pot) conspicuous as a monarch among those lesser retainers the slop-basin, the sugar-basin, the milk-jug, and that regiment of household troops the tea-cups, of Worcester china. It was usually the custom of us younkers to shout at the appearance of the tea-tray, hunger being strong within us, and a meal the chief pleasure of our existence. Then the tea-poy was opened, and the fragrance that arose we always associated with pagodas, willow-pattern plates, and pig-tails. When we had an opportunity we used to like to dip small hands and pretend to be Hong merchants sorting teas. Next the kettle arrived on the scene, and this kettle had a strong individuality of its own. It had always a swathe of soot on the side, and beyond that a prismatic streak where the fire had painted rainbows on it. The way it began to softly sing was a perpetual wonder to us, and might have led, if Watt had not been so quick, to the discovery of the steam-engine. A little purring note faint and distant, then grew gradually louder and fiercer till the lid began to vibrate and the water to gallop.

The pouring out, too, of the first strong brown cup, gradually paling as it mixed with the milk, the springing of the bubbles from the melting sugar (strong basis, those bubbles, of discrimination touching money) how familiar the sights to us now, how fresh and new and wonderful then. There was a new delight to us children when the pot had to be filled with a jet of steaming transparent water from the kettle, and then, before the dregs of the cups were emptied, we had other divinations to perform with the grounds, that raised us in our own estimation almost to the dignity of magicians.

The Chinese, it is now well known, do not use the flowers of the tea plant, fragrant though the yellow blossoms are. The different sorts of tea are easily discriminated. The Pekoe consists of the first downy leaflets, picked from young trees in the earliest spring. In May, the growth succeeding these forms the Souchong. The third gathering is the strong flavoured Congou. Bohea is a late leaf from a special district. In green teas, the Hyson is a gathering of tender leaflets. The Gunpowder is a selection of hyson; the coarser and yellower leaves are the Hyson Skin. The Twankay is the last gathered crop.

The tea drinker must not think that he is any surer of a pure unadulterated article than is the wine drinker. Tea in its finest state never reaches, never can reach, England. It is over-dried for our market, and the over-drying destroys the aroma, which is still further impaired by the sea voyage. Canton bohea is composed of last year's refuse mixed with fresh inferior sorts, all over-dried to fit them for transportation. The Chinese not only adulterate tea with other leaves, but they give the leaf an artificial bloom with indigo and gypsum, and scent it with resinous gums and buds of fragrant plants. They turn damaged black leaves into green by drying them over charcoal fires and colouring them with turmeric and indigo. Then comes the English cheat. In 1828 a manufactory was discovered where ash, sloe, and elder leaves, were dried to imitate tea, and then coated with white lead and verdigris to give colour and bloom.

If tea can only be grown in Assam, there may be soon found a remedy for all this cheating. In 1835 tea was found growing wild in Upper Assam—a country which we took from the Burmese. The climate is like that of China. At present, the tea from Assam rather resembles a coarse strong Congo, and is better for dilution with inferior growths that have more flavour, than to be used by itself.

We can only blame the use of tea when carried to excess. Tea is but an infusion of a herb in warm water, and half a pint of warm water at one meal is enough for any one.

WINIFRED.

I.

Sweet Winifred sits at the cottage door,
The rose and the woodbine shadow it o'er,
And turns to the clear blue summer skies
The clearer blue of her soft young eyes—
Turns to the balmy wind of the south
Her feverish, supplicating mouth,
To ask from Heaven and the sunny glow
The health she lost long, long ago.

II.

The rose on her cheeks is rose too red,
The light in her eyes is lightning sped,
And not the calm and steady ray
Of youth and strength in their opening day;
Her hands are lily-pale and thin,
You can see the blood beneath the skin;
Something hath smitten her to the core,
And she wastes and dwindles evermore.

III.

She thinks, as she sits in the glint o' the sun,
That her race is ended ere well begun,
And turns her luminous eyes aside
To *one* who asks her to be his bride—
Invisible to all but her,
Her friend, her lover, her worshipper;
Who stretches forth his kindly hand,
And saith what her heart can understand.

IV.

"Winifred! Winifred! be thou mine,
Many may woo thee, many may pine,
To win from thy lips the sweet caress,
But thou canst not give it, or answer 'yes.'
There is not one amid them all,
To whom if the prize of thyself should fall,
Who would not suffer more cruel pain
Than would ever spring from thy disdain.

V.

"Only to *me* canst thou be given
The bridegroom sent to thee from Heaven;
Come to me! Come! Thy dower shall be
The wealth of Immortality.
Eternal youth, perennial joy,
And love that never shall change or cloy;
All shall be thine the hour we wed,
Sweet Winifred! Be thou mine!" he said.

VI.

"Take me!" she answered, with faint low breath,
"I know thee well. Thy name is Death.
I've looked on thy merciful face too long
To think of thee as a pain or wrong.
I know thou'lt keep thy promise true,
And lead me life's dark portals through.
Up! up! on wings to the starry dome,
Up! up to Heaven! my bridal home."

VII.

He laid his hand on her trembling wrist,
Her beautiful, coy, cold lips he kiss'd,
And took her away from sister and brother,
From sorrowing sire and weeping mother;
From all she loved. With a smile she went,
Of peace and patience and sweet content.
'Twas but life's vesture laid in the sod,
'Twas life itself to the throne of God!

OUT WITH THE MILITIA.

The worst of belonging to the militia is that you have to do duty. The task of receiving your commission is not very arduous, and may be performed without much professional training. It is flattering, too, to be informed by that important piece of parchment that Her Majesty relies upon your loyalty, courage, and so forth; for as the royal lady has not the pleasure of your acquaintance, she must, of course, found her belief upon your reputation in society, aided, perhaps, by the favourable opinion expressed by the lord lieutenant of the county, who is the immediate agent in the matter. It is he, in fact, who signs the document, unless you happen to be adjutant or quartermaster (appointments made from the regulars), in which case Her Majesty performs the office herself. The process of paying the guinea, demanded with remarkable punctuality by the Clerk of Lieutenancy for the parchment in question, may also be accomplished with success; indeed, a cheerful alacrity usually accompanies this part of the proceeding. Getting your uniform, again, is not much of an undertaking, other things being equal; and the presentation at court, which should follow as soon as may be, cannot be considered among the difficulties of the profession. It is the duty of the training which is the drawback.

You are reminded of this necessity in good time. A month or more before the crisis, you are officially informed, "Upon her Majesty's Service," that the regiment will assemble on a certain Monday just before the end of April for four weeks' training; and the approach of this, the season, has been marked for some weeks previously by announcements in The Gazette that Her Majesty has been graciously pleased to accept certain resignations and to make certain other appointments among the officers. This is the time, in short, of a great many changes in the personnel of the force, where a long period of service is by no means the rule.

I underwent the preliminary responsibilities with a constancy worthy of a British officer, and my experiences are, I dare say, much the same as they would be in most regiments of the service. Our head-quarters are not very far from London, in a neighbourhood inhabited principally by clerks and commercial men, and whose houses and general arrangements are all characteristic of quiet people with quiet incomes, who disappear during the week, and present an appearance of population to the district only on Sundays. Even grown-up women are scarce on week days, seeming generally to keep within doors, leaving the thoroughfares—which, by the way, are open and pleasant enough—principally to young girls and children.

We have permanent barracks, provided by the county, upon what would be a very satisfactory scale, but for some important deficiencies. On one side of the large square are the commandants' and officers' rooms, the armoury, and store-rooms, the guard-room, and the cells for prisoners. Opposite, are the magazine, and a covered shed for the occasional accommodation of the arms. The third side is occupied by the quarters of the non-commissioned officers, and the fourth side cannot be said to be occupied at all; it is open, and the wall forms the boundary of the back gardens of the adjacent houses. The head-quarters' staff entertained here all the year round consists of between thirty and forty persons, including the adjutant, quartermaster, and assistant-surgeon; the principal surgeon lives elsewhere, and appears only during training. The remainder of the staff includes non-commissioned officers, bandsmen, and buglers: the latter an important element, as the regiment is light. There are no quarters in the barracks for commissioned officers, nor for the men. The officers of the permanent staff have houses conveniently close by, and the others take lodgings in

the neighbourhood: two shillings a day each, being allowed for the purpose by a considerate country. The men are accommodated in a similar manner upon a humble scale, for the small charge of fourpence each per day, except in the case of those who have homes within reachable distances.

It is muster morning, and ten o'clock is the time for assembling in the barrack square. The ground has been already marked out for the position of the companies, from Number One to Number Ten, or rather from A to K, according to the recent nomenclature of authority, the letter J being omitted. By nine o'clock or so, a few men have arrived, and, taking their respective places, form a skeleton of the battalion. The recruits, too, who have been hard at drill for a fortnight previously, are soon on the ground, and take a position of their own: the more efficient among them being drafted from time to time into companies. The appearance of the men is not cheering to the unaccustomed observer, who thinks them about the roughest lot he has ever seen. But there are rougher to come, and in the roughest depths there always seems to be a rougher still, who is continually making his appearance. The prevailing fashion among them is to be visibly unkempt and unshorn, with a strong suspicion of being unwashed. As to costume, fustian is an evident favourite, and there is a strong attachment to corduroy; the fur cap of costermongering life is a strong peculiarity, with which the billycock of more general adoption gracefully contends. You will not see any without coats or boots, but shirts and socks are not invariable; and you may observe some in such tatters as might secure the wearers immediate engagements as scarecrows. It must not be supposed, however, that there are *no* clean, decently dressed, and respectable looking men. Here and there you find some who might, and probably do, belong to by no means the worst class of mechanics or artisans; day labourers are also largely represented. By ten o'clock, however, when nearly all are assembled (the entire strength is a little over eight hundred), you cannot fail to remark that the preponderating element is, as far as appearance goes, of the costermongering kind. Dog-fanciers, likewise, are considerably represented in the ranks.

The officers have been arriving in the meantime, not in plain clothes, but undress uniform, which they wear on all ordinary parades. The adjutant and the quartermaster, who have no sinecure to-day, are among the first, and the colonel is not among the last. It is a pleasant gathering of old or new friends, many not having met since the previous training.

The newly joined officers, unless very recently appointed, have had four weeks' instruction with a regiment of regulars, Guards or Line as they may prefer, so that they can put in a respectable appearance on parade. For kindly consenting to make themselves efficient to this degree, they have been awarded by a grateful government, the sum of five shillings per day; their pay in the regiment, as subalterns, amounting respectively, with lodging allowance, to nine and sixpence. In the officers' room you may soon pick up anything you want to know concerning regimental matters—why it was that some have resigned, how it is that others have got leave from the training, and so forth, with various personal matters of a more or less pleasant kind. The colonel, too, comes in, from time to time, deporting himself in the orthodox manner of commanding officers—thorough friendliness, tempered with a thorough sense of discipline. At ten o'clock, on the sound of the bugle, the officers of companies take their posts. The men are all drawn up in order. Their names having been called over, the business of the day begins. This is confined to the distribution of clothing and kits, which are brought out of the stores, and laid upon the ground in front of the companies. In some cases, the clothing is marked with the names of its former recipients, so that the re-assignment is easy; but this arrangement is not always observed; and even if it were, there would still be a great deal of trouble entailed by changes. A portion of the clothing is new, and distributed for the first time. The uniform clothing—the summer and winter trousers, jacket and tunic, shako and forage-cap—are made to last for five years: that is to say, five periods of four weeks each: after which, and under some circumstances earlier, they become the property of the soldier. At the end of each training, and before being returned into store, they are pressed and refreshed with a thorough fumigation. As for his boots, the militiaman is free to walk away in them; he also retains his two shirts and two pairs of socks, which are provided afresh every year. The other articles in his kit—razor, brushes, knife, fork, and spoon, &c.—pass into his possession after five years, on the same terms as the uniforms.

The knapsacks containing the kits are distributed first. These are all marked with names, except those issued to the recruits, so they are soon assigned. The pay-sergeant calls over the list, and the men come up one by one, as soon as they can be got into order for the purpose; but there is a great deal of talking and practical joking going on, requiring frequent repression. The sergeant is a smart specimen of a non-commissioned officer, an old linesman, wearing the ribbons of the Crimean, the Turkish, and the Indian Mutiny medals, besides that of the "long service and meritorious conduct," on the breast of his jacket. He is not a man to be trifled with.

"Jenkins!" calls the sergeant; "where's Jenkins? Oh, I see you. What do you mean by skulking in the rear? Take that pipe out of your mouth and come for your knapsack."

Jenkins, in a careless and rather sulky manner—induced by eleven months' suspension from discipline—puts his pipe, alight as it is, into his side pocket, and comes forward, muttering something about not having heard.

"Then you'd better hear next time," is the practical rejoinder. "Jones!"

Jones, who was just about to tip off the hat of an adjacent companion in arms, consents to suspend that playful act for the present, obeys the call, and gathers up his face into a respectful expression.

"Jones the Second!" says the sergeant, who does not condescend to Christian names.

Another Jones, so unmistakably a costermonger, that you expect to see his donkey in the background, steps up with unexpected alacrity. He is immediately detected to be Jones the Third, and is made to stand aside until his turn comes. Jones the Second, however, does not answer. There is a little pause, and then an intimate friend of the missing warrior intimates that he thinks Jones the Second is in prison—knows he got three months some time ago for assaulting the police.

"Well, we can't wait here till he comes out," says the sergeant. So Jones the Third gets his knapsack, immediately after which process Jones the Second appears, insinuating himself round by the rear to escape observation. He is promptly "spotted," and bullied. It appears that he has really been suffering from loss of liberty consequent upon a conflict with the civil power; however, as he was restored to the Briton's normal state of freedom two days ago, the incident is not a logical explanation of his being late this morning. So he takes his knapsack and retires to his company in disgrace.

"James the First!" is the next call. James the First, with marked disrespect for the prejudices of his royal namesake, is smoking a short pipe. There is another row about that; the sergeant acting the part of the counterblast, and successfully repressing this act of indiscipline.

"James the Second" succeeds James the First, in ostentatious defiance of historical precedent. He is a very alert, steady, and respectable man, who, if he obtained a situation as king, would as soon think of flying as of abdicating. Nobody is better aware of the fact than the sergeant, who gives him his knapsack with something like graciousness.

"James the Third!" The name and style sound Jacobitical. But James the Third is evidently not the "king over the water." Certain appearances indicate that he is rather the king over the beer. These are promptly detected, so his knapsack is withheld, and the convivial monarch is exiled to his St. Germain in the guard-room.

In this manner the other names are gone through, the process being performed concurrently in the remaining nine companies. After a short time the men begin to fall into military habits, become steady enough, and give very little trouble. Considering that they have for the most part been scattered nobody knows where, for the last eleven months, it is wonderful how few are missing, and even of those some are sure to turn up to-morrow.

The knapsacks being all distributed, the clothing takes its turn. This is a more tedious business, as so many of the men have to be fitted for the first time, or afresh, as the case may be, and the general tendency of the garments is to be too large. The latter fact is owing to the average height in the army being adopted as the basis of calculation, whereas the average height in the militia is considerably under that mark. Altogether the process of adjustment is a difficult one, and by no means satisfactory in its results. By one o'clock, however, the men are supplied, besides their kits, with jackets, trousers, and caps, and then the "parade" comes to an end. The next proceeding is to pay and dismiss. By two every man present has received his eighteen pence, with an extra tenpence "for a hot meal," which is allowed him on the first day. His pay, I should add, with the extra twopence voted last session to the army generally, is one shilling and sevenpence a day; but for the sake of convenience the difference is made up on Saturdays. For this the militiaman has to "find himself," and seems able to do so; but he has a bounty of a pound at the end of the training, and sometimes draws upon it in advance. It must be remembered, too, that he very frequently works at a trade during the training; and those who pursue avocations in connexion with a donkey and a barrow are generally allowed partial if not entire liberty on Saturdays, so that they may not sacrifice their great harvest day of the week.

During all these proceedings the officers have remained with their companies, exercising a more or less active superintendence, and preserving order and propriety in the ranks, which on the first day are always apt to run a little wild. Attendance in orderly room will probably keep them another hour, and it is likely to be three o'clock before they find themselves free.

The proceedings in orderly room are embellished with a little more variety than is to be found in the regular service, owing to the militiaman having private pursuits. These are, of course, no defence for drunkenness or general misconduct, which is met with the usual effective punishment—extra drill, loss of pay, and solitary confinement, according to the nature of the offence. And in cases which seem to call for a more severe sentence than the colonel is able to inflict upon his own authority, a court martial is summoned. For absence without leave the most ingenious reasons are assigned. Thus a man this year expected to be excused by alleging that he was going about, selling fruit, and "found himself" at Fulham instead of at Whitechapel, whither he had intended bending his steps: the consequence being that he could not get back to barracks until next morning. Such excuses are invariably taken for what they are worth, which is very little indeed.

Orderly room being over, the officers, except two who are in orders as officers of the day, may go where they will until ten o'clock to-

morrow morning; but wherever they go eventually, you may be sure that they will go now to the mess.

Our Mess is not of a very pretentious character. It is not our fault, but the fault of those familiar conditions known as "circumstances over which we have no control." We are excellently provided, as far as our barracks are concerned, but we have no mess-house, and it seems to be nobody's business to build us one. The county won't do it, and the officers have never been sufficiently enthusiastic in their own behalf to undertake the responsibility. We are obliged to find our welcome at an inn, and, as there is only one inn adequate to our purpose in the neighbourhood, we have no choice of Inns. However, we might be worse off than at the Outram Arms, where we are monarchs of all we survey, and have a flag flying in our honour from the first-floor window. The mess-room is sufficiently large for our purpose, except on guest nights, when it is a little crowded; the band plays outside, under convenient cover. With our colours—we have an old and a new set—displayed at either end, the apartment looks every inch our property. As we have our own plate, and glass, and every requisite for the table, we shall have nothing to complain of in these respects. We have also our own wine, and as we guarantee the landlord a great many more dinners than are consumed, he is able to furnish them on a pleasant scale.

On parade next morning the men are equipped in the undress clothing given out yesterday, and, being kempt, shorn, and undeniably washed, bear very little trace of their identity in private life. The change is immensely for the better. The men are transformed into soldiers, not quite equal in appearance to the Grenadier, the Coldstream, or the Scots Fusilier Guards, but bear comparison with many regiments of the line, and wear that business-like obedient look which distinguishes all regular troops from volunteers.

The boots and accoutrements are now given out, and subsequently the tunics and shakos. There is the same confusion of boots as there was of jackets and trousers; and as the boots become the property of the wearers, the wearers are especially solicitous to have them as they ought to be. By dint of changing, and changing, and changing again, remonstrating with sergeants, and appealing to officers against arbitrary decisions, every man is at last suited: a few men, perhaps, with very exceptional extremities, remaining to be provided from the store. The tunics are a trial, but even these are at last assigned, and only in a few instances is there a flagrant exhibition of the right man in the wrong coat. The distribution of the accoutrements is a very simple matter. The uniform, to say nothing of the hair-cutting and the shaving, has worked wonders. There is a general sense of duty and discipline observable throughout the ranks, and orderly ways seem to sit upon them quite naturally. Many are old linesmen, while many more are in their second or third terms of service in the militia.

On the third day the battalion is paraded with arms, and the work of the training begins in earnest. Such of the recruits as are sufficiently advanced, are taken into the ranks, the remainder being drilled by themselves. When the regiment marches out of the barrack-yard it is with the air of being thoroughly accustomed to duty, and the movements which follow in the field bear no trace of inexperience. The result is surprising to those who have been accustomed to consider military training as a special thing which can be combined with no other pursuit; for the volunteers, coming as they do from so different a class of men, are not a case in point. I would not venture to say either that all militia regiments are equally efficient, but I know that the average is far better than is generally supposed; and there is very good reason why a militiaman should make quicker progress than a volunteer, and ultimately become a more steady soldier. He is trained under strict discipline, and while "out", is kept at constant work; there is no shirking; and not only does he know that his pay depends upon his doing his duty, but that punishment will surely visit its neglect.

After the first day out there is no cessation of parades. The effect is soon apparent among the men, who become steady and soldierlike to an extent that no one could possibly expect who saw them for the first time at the muster. I I don't mean to say that they invariably read improving books in their leisure hours, or that they ask one another to tea, or that they make any professions of being so virtuous as to shame other people from their cakes and ale. But I do mean to say that they are wonderfully orderly on the whole; that a very small proportion of them are brought up to the orderly room, or incur any severe punishment; and that we very seldom hear of complaints in the neighbourhood.

The training of the officers is more difficult than the training of the men, and some naturally adapt themselves to their duties more readily and more successfully than others. But the mania for efficiency has of late become so great that we all have to do our best. Some among even the officers of companies have served in the line, while others have the opportunity of keeping up their drill in volunteer regiments. Otherwise the short period of annual service in "the constitutional force of the country" is very far from being sufficient to bring the militia up to the mark of the regulars. It is only when a militia regiment is embodied for a year or two at a time that it has a fair chance. There have been no militia regiments embodied for a longer period than the regular four weeks, since the days of the Crimean war, and the Indian mutiny; but the experience then gained was of a very favourable character, and greatly increased the estimation of the force by authority.

Our life during training is very like the lives of any other officers in country quarters who do not live in barracks. After the first week, symptoms of a contagious disease, known as asking for leave, take a confirmed form. The instincts in this direction are, indeed, in some cases abnormally developed, and require a check from superior command, which, to do superior command justice, they generally get. We receive a great deal of attention from the local gentry, who are hospitality itself. Upon all great occasions there is a request, either verbally or in writing, for uniform; but some among us, who take their tone from the Guards, steadily refuse to confer this innocent enjoyment. In church on Sundays, when we go with the men, uniform is indispensable. One officer has to go with the Catholics, who usually form a tolerably strong detachment. The Wesleyans have also the option of attending their place of worship, but every man is made to go somewhere. The rule is the same all through the service.

The officers vary both as to professional and social peculiarities. There is the model officer, who has been in the line, and who, while secretly regarding the Militia service as mild, sets a severe example to those who are inclined to take a light or frivolous view of its demands. The officer who has been in the line always looks with regretful sadness upon another class of his comrades in arms, represented by the officer with mysterious leave. The latter usually does his duty properly enough when present; but he is continually disappearing for a day, and turning up again, impervious to all questioning. He has urgent private affairs, I take it, of a kind to demand recognition, which cannot be said for the officer who shirks upon system, who, you may be sure, is not unrepresented in the regiment. Then there is the easy-going officer, whose lodgings are always full of lunch and ladies, and who is dropped in upon very generally in consequence of the double attraction. He will probably have his mother and sisters to see him occasionally, but, as a general rule, draws a "hard-and-fast line" at cousins and friends. He has always the best lodgings in the place, and is one of the two officers who have pianofortes at command.

Another variety is the officer who is going to get his company. He has perhaps been of the light-and-airy school, but, on a sudden, manifests great respect for his duty, and is found "mugging up" the red book at odd times with great enthusiasm. He has a great dread of being spun, but, of course, will not confess the fact. It is to be hoped that he will not make the same mistake which was once made by a subaltern in the line, undergoing an examination for a step. He had got his answers by heart in anticipation of the questions, but had not calculated on the order in which the latter would be asked.

"How old are you?" said the examining authority.

"Five, sir," was the prompt answer—he had a great notion that he ought to answer promptly.

"How many years have you been in the service?" asked the examining authority, giving him another chance.

"Twenty-three, sir," was the ready reply.

"Either you are a fool or I am," said the examining authority severely.

"Both, sir," answered the unconscious subaltern, not daring to listen, and believing that he was getting on remarkably well—a delusion which I need scarcely say was dispelled in a very decided manner.

But the officer who is going to get his company is quite eclipsed by the officer who has got it. The moral tone of the latter goes up wonderfully, and he makes very severe remarks upon those of his friends who take a light and airy view of the service—assuring them in private that it is not a mere plaything, but must be considered in the light of a serious responsibility, and hinting at the extraordinary efficiency which in these days is necessary for promotion. The officer who is always going to resign is another character. He is about to take this desperate step every time he gets "fits" from the colonel; but he never takes it. A great acquisition to the regiment is the officer who is always doing somebody else's duty. He does it because he is good natured, but makes the excuse that it "improves" him. We call him the chronic subaltern of the day. The musical officer who has composed a polka, and is the inevitable band president, is another acquisition, and a popular fellow. The latter description, too, must be given of the latest subaltern: who is always boasting, without any reason at all—for at heart he is strictly abstemious—of the number of "sodas and brandies" he takes at mess. He says sixteen, and is pleasantly told by authority that fourteen is the limit allowed in the regiment. It is he of whom the story is told that being suddenly left by the captain to take his company to church, he ordered the usual compliment to the guard on passing, in this manner: "Here, Number 3, 4, 5, or whatever you are, do that thing that you know you always do to the guard." This is as military as the order given by the volunteer colonel (an alderman) when marching through the city, to "Turn up Chancery-lane." New subalterns, by the way, are always very important when pay day comes, and they are actually to have solid recognition for their services; but their transports are considerably modified when they find ten guineas taken for entrance subscription to the mess, and that, counting other claims, instead of receiving anything, they have a little deficiency to make good. It is the two junior officers, too, who carry the colours, and for the privilege of this "honourable bore"—as I have heard the duty described—they are each expected to pay, upon the first occasion, a sovereign to their sergeants.

Of course we return the hospitalities of the locality, as far as the mess is concerned, and our

guest nights are very grand occasions in their way. It is on the off-nights, when we are among ourselves and talk "shop," that we really develop. Then it is that you may hear our wants discussed and our wishes shadowed forth. The service is not popular, and there is a general opinion among its officers that it does not meet with sufficient attention, especially in comparison with the volunteers. Militia officers, it is said, ought to hold the queen's commission instead of a lord lieutenant's; they ought to have some advantages in the way of brevet promotion; they ought to be allowed facilities for exchanging from one regiment to another as in the line:—an arrangement which would keep many officers in the service who now leave merely because they wish to leave their regiments. Perhaps some of these points will be borne in mind in certain changes understood to be in contemplation for the militia force. Already a tendency has been shown to form a link between the militia and the line. I allude to the institution of the Militia Reserve, by an Act of parliament passed last session, and just beginning to take effect. The main provision of this is, that a certain proportion of men in the militia, unmarried, under thirty years of age, and having attested physical fitness, who may hold themselves liable for five years, in the event of war, to be drafted into the line, shall receive, in advance, a bounty of one pound per annum. The inducement offered is of course the chance that such men may not be wanted at all, and will get their bounty for nothing. That the plan will work well when thoroughly understood seems probable enough; but this season I doubt if it has been attended with any great results. And it is incomplete, inasmuch as it makes no provision for officers, who need encouragement, and would in many cases be encouraged were facilities afforded them for entering the regular service. The majority of these would never dream of making the army a profession, but on the other hand an opportunity of the kind would attract many who have passed the prescribed age for direct commissions, and—with a useful effect probably on the line—would certainly popularise the militia service.

The last week of the training is distinguished by its most important event—the Inspection. Hitherto the office has been performed by a lieutenant-colonel of one of the Guards' regiments, but this year the duty devolves upon the newly appointed Deputy Inspector of Reserve Forces. It is a trying time. Not only is the regiment made to show what it can do in the field, but its interior economy is closely examined, failings of every kind are laid bare, and the officers of companies are subjected to a close investigation of their knowledge and capacity. We passed the ordeal in a triumphant manner, and were able to entertain the inspecting officer at lunch when all was over, without any detraction from our dignity. The inspection came so late in the training that, when it was over, there was nothing left for us to do but undo everything we had done in the way of organisation. We have returned the arms to the armoury, taken in the clothing and accoutrements, and have paid off the men, who, in their habits as they live for eleven months in the year, are fast leaving the barrack-yard. There has been a great deal of onerous work as regards accounts, but it is all over; and even the mess is broken up, for the waggon which has just driven in at the gate, brings the plate and other property back into the stores, where it will remain until next year under the care of our zealous quartermaster—a model man for the work, besides being a linesman of distinguished service—with a blaze of medals on his breast and a wonderful story about each, and an additional wonderful story about some elephants, which he always tells when he is in a good humour, which he always is. Orderly-room is just over, and we are all about to part. Two of us who are on duty must stay to visit the guard, and the solitary sentry remaining; for the sentry at the magazine is taken off as we have no more ammunition. At twelve o'clock to-night the guard will go, and the barracks be left to the permanent staff. There is a shaking of hands all round, a kind word from our colonel, and we all go our ways.

EIDER DUCKS.

Though the Eider duck is common along the whole coast of Norway, and may be seen in large numbers on many parts of the western shore, it is more especially in the far north that it finds a home. On those rocky islands, or "holms," which fringe the north-west coast of the country, and which form a barrier against the fury of the Atlantic and Arctic Sea, they breed in very great numbers, and are very jealously protected. Not a gun may be fired in their neighbourhood; even foreign vessels are forbidden to salute, near an eider-duck island. For many of these barren reefs, which are almost entirely without vegetation, swarm with eider ducks, which resort thither to build, and render them properties of no small value to the owners, who collect the down from the nests for exportation.

The best down is that which is found in the nest, and which the female plucks from her breast. It is called "live" down, to distinguish it from that which is plucked off the dead bird; and there is an appreciable difference between the two, both as regards price and quality. If a handful of "live" down be thrown into the air, it will adhere together in a compact mass, even though a brisk breeze be blowing; but the "dead" down would be blown about in all directions. "Live" down, when exposed to the warmth of sun or fire, will rise much more than dead. Since in Norway the eider duck is under the protection of the government, which heavily fines any one who kills one of the birds, but little "dead" down is exported from that country. But in Greenland and in parts of

Iceland, the birds do not meet with the same considerate attention, and are therefore frequently destroyed for their down's sake.

The eider drake is a remarkably handsome bird, and is nearly double the size of an ordinary farm-yard duck; the duck, which is smaller than her mate, is of a sombre brown colour. She generally lays from five to eight eggs, after which she will begin to sit, unless the eggs be taken. But as it is the object of the proprietor of a colony of ducks to get as much down as possible, the nest is generally robbed once or even twice of its down and eggs, to induce the bird to lay again and pluck a further supply from her breast.

It is a most interesting sight to visit one of these Norwegian duck colonies, and observe the jealous care with which the birds are treated. The ducks approve of it, and become so tame that they will even suffer themselves to be taken off their nest by the "gudewife."

Mr. Shepherd, in The North-west Peninsula of Iceland, gives a most interesting account of a visit he paid to an eider-duck island off the extreme western part of the country. It was but three-quarters of a mile in width, and was almost entirely surrounded by a stone wall about three feet high. Every alternate stone at the bottom of this wall had been taken out, leaving a hole for the duck to build her nest in. When he visited it every compartment was tenanted, and "it was a curious sight," he writes, "to see a whole line of ducks fly out from the wall as I walked along it." The island belonged to a widow woman, who devoted all her care to the rearing of the eider duck, and who doubtless made a pretty good thing out of it. The walls and roof of her dwelling, moreover, were covered with ducks, while even "a duck was sitting in the scraper."

The eider duck is a very close sitter, and her mate is ever on the watch to protect her from intruders, or give her timely notice of approaching danger. Foxes and ravens are among their deadliest and craftiest enemies; and these will frequently come and pull the duck off her nest in order to rob her of her eggs, or callow brood.

Take for example this true story of an eider duck and a raven. The duck was sitting assiduously on her nest, for hatching time was near. But a crafty raven, ever on the look out for eggs, made up his mind to have a treat at her expense. The eider duck being a heavy bird, is not very easily dislodged. The raven attacked in the rear, and with his powerful beak laid hold of her tail, to pull her backward. The duck, from sitting so long, was scarcely a match for the robber, and would have been forced to give way. But the drake, on guard near by, presently saw the assault on his wife, and hastened to the rescue. So intent was the raven upon getting at the eggs, that the drake was on him before he was aware. With head erect and ruffled feathers he made a sudden dart at the raven, and took a firm grip of his enemy's neck with his strong beak. The raven at once gave up his hold of the duck's tail. But do what he would, he could not get his neck out of the drake's beak, and, from the position in which he was held, his own beak and his claws were useless. He would have flown up could he have done so, carrying the drake with him; but this was impossible. Moreover he was being choked. One side of the rock on which the struggle took place, sloped gradually down to the sea, and it was the drake's purpose to drag his enemy in this direction. Slowly but surely he succeeded. In vain did the raven with the eider drake upon him, flap his powerful wings; they only beat the ground. In vain did he utter the hoarsest of cries. At one time it seemed as if the raven would have escaped after all; but never once did his opponent loosen the hold on his throat, until he was dragged to the edge of the rock whence the drake rolled down with him into the sea. A splash, a ripple, and the two birds locked together vanished from the surface. The drake presently came up again. The black assailant of his wife remained below.

Eider down needs a good deal of cleaning and dressing, as the pieces of grass and twigs of which the nest is made get so intermingled with it, that it is not easy to get rid of them entirely. Each duck yields on an average about eight ounces of down, which is reduced one half by dressing. The method of cleaning is to spread the down out in the sun to dry, and as in those far northern latitudes for six weeks the sun never sets below the horizon, it soon dries. Should rainy weather set in, the down has to be dried in ovens. The particles of grass and twigs, becoming brittle, are picked out by hand, and the down is placed on sieves to be well riddled until all the small bits and the dust have fallen through. It is then ready for exportation, and is shipped chiefly to Denmark.

Most of the down in the London market comes from Greenland and Iceland, and is not nearly so valuable as the Norwegian, because the greater part of that which comes from the first-named countries is the dead down. Once or twice the writer has had eider down sent him from a "holm" on the other side of the North Cape, and has always found it expedient to have this down dressed over again. In buying eider down, therefore, the purchaser must not mind if he find twigs and dust mixed up with it, for he may rest assured that he has the genuine article. Eider down plucked off the dead bird, is perfectly clean, but not nearly so valuable.

It takes (according to size) from one and a half to three pounds of down to make a quilt. It is a great mistake to cram too much down into the quilt, as it then becomes lumpy, and defeats the object in view, which is to have the quilt as light as possible.

There are two methods of making a quilt, adopted in Norway and Sweden; the one is to "quilt" it, and this is the best way, for it prevents the down from collecting in masses in any particular part; the other is what may be

called the tubular method. Little pockets or tubes of fine linen running the whole length of the quilt, are filled with the down, which then receives its covering of silk. But in farm-houses in the interior of the country, the down is frequently put into a bag the size of the bed; and as there is nothing to prevent it from collecting in one corner, the result generally is that the occupant of the bed will wake up with the quilt on the ground, and himself freezing.

The nest of the eider duck should never be robbed of its down more than twice, and even then it is a piteous sight to see the bird with her breast almost bare. It is said that when her supply of down is exhausted, the drake will make up the deficiency from his own breast. The down of the drake, by the way, is as white as swans' down.

The eggs that have been taken are kept for the winter's supply, but the duck is allowed to bring up the second batch in peace and quietness. And thus, as there is a natural instinct more or less developed in all creatures to breed in the old spot where they first saw the light, it depends almost entirely on the owner whether his colony of ducks shall flourish, or shall dwindle away to one or two couples.

Many, to their sorrow, have often killed the golden goose for her eggs, but in these days the eider duck is usually treated as she deserves, with kindness and care: attentions which she never fails to repay "tenfold out of her bosom."

THE CENTRAL WORLD.

Who was the Bruce among many Bruces who discovered the Central World? Whereabouts is the cottage in Kent to which he retired after he had come back from his wonderful voyage?

I do not know, and yet I flatter myself that I am the only person on earth under sixty years of age who ever heard of this particular Bruce at all. Curious as were his discoveries, he is certainly not famous.

My knowledge of Bruce is derived from a little book containing rather more than forty pages, which in 1802 was published by Mr. S. Fisher, of St. John's-lane, Clerkenwell, and which bears this elaborate title: "Bruce's voyage to Naples and journey up Mount Vesuvius; giving an account of the strange disaster which happened on his arrival at the summit; the discovery of the Central World, with the laws, customs, and manners of that nation described; their swift and peculiar mode of travelling; the wonderful riches, virtue, and knowledge the inhabitants possess; the author's travels in that country; and the friendly reception he met with from its sovereign and his people." This title is not a specimen of elegant composition, nor can much be said of the aquatint frontispiece, which represents a young man with his eyes blindfolded and an old man with his eyes wide open, each astride on a flying eagle. Nevertheless, the title and the aquatint both inspired me with a certain amount of curiosity, and I went steadily through the little book which chance had thrown into my hands.

Nor was I ill rewarded for my slight trouble. The work attributed to Bruce is one of those many accounts of visits to imaginary or inaccessible regions that have been written with the view of satirising the world with which the author is familiar. Famed specimens of the genus are to be found in the works of Rabelais, Quevedo, Swift, and Fielding. Less famed specimens help to make up the voluminous collection of "imaginary voyages" edited by Garnier, and published in French towards the end of the last century. Bruce, as I have said, is not famous at all. He, or the person to whom he owes his being, was born—not like many a great man, before—but after, his time. Had he stepped into existence a few years sooner, he would probably have occupied a niche in the Pantheon of Garnier.

But now to tell what befel this by no means notorious Bruce. Having been very ill used and utterly ruined at home, he went on board a man-of-war as clerk to a kindly captain, and sailing to Naples, made the ascent of Mount Vesuvius with a chosen party, of whom the captain was one. When he had gone as high as folks usually went, he resolved, contrary to the advice of his excellent friend, to proceed a little further, and peep into the crater. No sooner had he closely approached it on all fours than the ground sank beneath him, and he went headforemost somewhere, so completely surrounded by fire and sulphur that he was wellnigh suffocated. Instead of coming to a quick and sudden termination, as is the case with common falls, Bruce's fall went on, and the view that met Bruce's eye was perpetually changing. Sometimes there was nothing but fire and smoke, sometimes he was charmed with a brilliancy apparently produced by the lustre of innumerable jewels, and then came a resplendent glory that dazzled him outright. Still the fall went on, and presently the excessive glory was subdued into an agreeable light, and a globe, in which were seas, continents, mountains, and islands, eventually became visible to Bruce, who alighted on a load of hay that had been heaped together in a field. As he did not now seem to be above some six yards from the ground, he placed himself on the edge of the heap and slid down the side; but had no sooner reached the bottom than he found himself fixed as an iron nail by a powerful magnet. He would have perished in this miserable state had not a venerable old man come up to him, and, after breathing a short prayer, anointed him with the contents of a small box, which at once not only set him free, but rendered him as light as a feather. His first impulse was to fall on his knees and to kiss the hand of his benefactor, but he found, to his astonishment, that this form of expressing gratitude was rather offensive than otherwise. The old gentleman, however, was not so much annoyed that he forgot

the laws of hospitality; so, taking Bruce by a way on which the dust was of gold and the pebbles precious stones, he brought him to his own house (the walls of which were mostly composed of jewels), and introduced him to his wife: a pleasant old lady, who, in the first instance, regaled him with a glass of cordial. The language in which the amiable couple conversed was altogether strange to Bruce, but the old gentleman soon set him right by anointing the tip of his tongue, his ears, his forehead, his temples, and the crown of his head. He was then enabled to understand and converse with his new acquaintance.

A sojourn with the hospitable old gentleman soon made Bruce acquainted with the domestic habits of the nation now brought to his notice. Three per day was the number of meals, none of which lasted more than ten minutes, and which all consisted of vegetable food. For beds, the people used a mattress, with a rug or quilt for their only covering; so hardy were they rendered by this mode of living, that the average length of life among them was three hundred years, and a man of one hundred and fifty was thought to have attained his prime. Their dress was a kind of petticoat, reaching from the waist to the ankles; their shoes, made of leather, were large and easy; and they wore their hair and beards to a great length, in the belief that it was impiety to destroy a manifest gift of their Creator.

But, after all, where was Bruce when he made his interesting observations? This he did not exactly know himself until he had been enlightened by his venerable host, who informed him that the world in which he now sojourned was the very centre of the globe which men call the earth. The Newtonian law, according to which the attraction of gravitation varies inversely as the square of the distance from the centre, thus fully accounted for Bruce's adhesion to the soil, when he alighted from the load of hay. The Central World is one thousand miles in diameter, and necessarily having no light from the sun, is illumined by the concave surface of the earth, which is thickly studded with jewels of enormous size. Bruce, looking as if he did not precisely understand how a jewel, large or small, could shine in the dark, was informed that the Central World itself constantly emitted rays, which fell or rather rose upon the gems, and the efficiency of which was further increased by an atmosphere thirty miles high. This system of give and take having satisfactorily accounted for the existence of day, the phenomenon of night had yet to be explained; Bruce, to his infinite edification, was informed that an opaque body, of exactly the same size and area as half the concave surface of the earth, performed a complete revolution in twenty-four hours, and thus for twelve hours shut out the light reflected by the jewels. The Centralians, however, are not without their star-lit nights, for the opaque body is itself sprinkled with large gems, which answer the purpose of the constellations in the heavens contemplated by the inhabitants of the earth's surface.

Taking an early walk one morning, and finding himself rather fatigued, Bruce laid himself on a field that was one carpet of lovely flowers, and delighted himself with listening to the songs of the innumerable birds that surrounded him. For some time he remained motionless, lest by stirring he might frighten them away; but at last, venturing to raise his head in order to examine them more closely, he was pleased to find that, far from being timid, some of them perched on his head, some on his shoulders, and one even on his hand. While he was agreeably amused by a concert of these "feathered songsters" (a name commonly given to birds in 1802), he was found by his host, who, taking him home to breakfast, explained to him that the tameness of the birds, which appeared so surprising, was a natural result of the manners and customs of the country. Where other animals are devoured and persecuted by man, they usually fear and dislike him; but among the Centralians, whose diet consists exclusively of vegetables, and who would not on any account take the life of any being more highly organised than a cabbage, they find no cause for alarm. It may be added that the kindness of the Centralians to speechless creatures is in some measure founded on a firm belief that all animals are endowed with souls, and that acts dictated by reason have been wrongly attributed to instinct. This belief leads to the further inference that, inasmuch as beasts birds and insects are mostly free from the vices incident to humanity, they are really superior to the men we commonly find on the surface of the earth. The savage satire of Swift's Voyage to Houyhnhnms is thus repeated in a mild and amiable tone.

Further experiences familiarised Bruce with the docility of brutes in the Central World. A lion, whom he accidentally roused from sleep, licked his feet and fawned on him—nay, even brought back a large stone which he flung, to ascertain if the formidable animal had the usual habits of a faithful dog. Once, the evil nature he had acquired in the outer world, prompted him, on the discovery of a sitting hare, to long for a gun, and he picked up a stone as an imperfect substitute; but the fearlessness with which the little creature ran up to him, and played a thousand tricks around him, touched his conscience, so, desisting from his infamous purpose, he resolved to be "more circumspect for the future."

After Bruce had passed some time with the family of his excellent host, the eldest son, a youth of seventy, proposed a jaunt to the capital, which being only three hundred miles off, could easily be reached by daylight, if they started at eight o'clock in the morning. The proposal was accepted with joy; and when the appointed time arrived, Bruce and the son, fortified by the host's wife with a basket containing sweet cakes and fruits, and a bottle of excellent cordial, prepared for their

journey. The vehicle in which this was to be performed, and which was standing at the door, was in shape somewhat like a one-horse chaise, but on each side of it, in lieu of wheels, were two bladders, ten times as large as those of an ordinary bullock. Before the chaise, to which they were fastened by silken cords, were two green birds, each about twice as big as a very large swan. These, of course, were to draw the vehicle, while the bladders were to keep it in a proper equilibrium.

The chaise having risen with Bruce and his companion to the level of a quarter of a mile, they floated smoothly along until, at the end of three hours, they stopped to pay a visit to the old man's daughter: a fine young girl of fifty, who had only been lately married, and was living in a country seat immediately beneath them. The mode of alighting was curious. Bruce's companion, when they were immediately over the court of the house, took some small cakes from his robe, which he threw upon the ground, and the birds, tempted by the sight of food, immediately descended. When the travellers had been set down at the gate of an elegant house, the birds were instantly released, and flew out of sight, to the infinite surprise of Bruce, who was, however, informed by his friend that there would be no difficulty about the rest of the journey. The lady received her guests with due hospitality, and conducted them to her husband, who, she said, was fishing in the garden. Do not let it be supposed that Izaak Walton's delightful book had fallen into the hand of this sporting gentleman and tempted him to depart from the usages of the Central World. "Fishing," in the ideas of that country, meant something very different from angling, as Bruce soon perceived. The gentleman in the garden was standing by a pond, near which was a cistern of clear water and a vessel full of grain. When he stirred the pond with a stick, fishes ran by hundreds to the surface, and taking them out gently with his hand he cast them into the cistern, flinging after them some grain. When they had been sufficiently regaled he emptied the cistern into the pond; and Bruce reflected how much greater must be the pleasure of catching fish, with no other intent than to feed them, than that of taking them with hooks, and then leaving them on the ground to expire in agonies.

The newly married pair, at whose house this exercise of benevolence was observed, seem to have been rather more smartly attired than the Centralians in general. The gentleman, whose beard was not very long, inasmuch as he was only seventy years of age, wore on his head a turban of blue satin, adorned with crimson plumes; his jacket and petticoat were white, and his robe was crimson. The lady had black hair, which hung down in ringlets to her waist; her jacket and petticoat were pink; and as she did not wear a robe, the gracefulness of her person was distinctly perceptible, especially as she was not disfigured by stays.

The journey to the capital was not resumed until the following morning, when a whistle from Bruce's companion brought together a number of birds like the first pair, from which two were selected. At half-past one in the afternoon they reached Oudenteminos, as the capital was called, and put up at the house of a friend.

The form of the city is accurately described. Its centre is (Hibernicé) a large octagon square, from each side of which proceeds a street a mile in length, and as broad as the Haymarket. Narrower thoroughfares and ground for the use of the inhabitants occupy the spaces between the eight streets, at the end of each of which is a church, a still larger church having been erected in the central square. At the distance of about half a mile from the town stands the palace of the king, who, far from being highly elevated above the rest of his fellows, considers himself the principal servant of his people. Indeed, he has come to the throne not by hereditary succession, which is unknown, but simply because he is the oldest man in the country: the age of every person being registered to prevent mistakes.

The origin of evil, even in our wicked world, has been regarded by both philosophers and theologians as one of the most difficult of problems. This problem becomes still harder in the case of the Centralians, who seem so perfectly good, that they do not require the curb of any executive power. Nevertheless, they have an origin of evil peculiar to themselves. About a century before Bruce's descent, a great multitude of the inhabitants of the outer world, members of the most wicked race that ever existed (and consequently not Englishmen), having, as a punishment for their sins, been swallowed up by an earthquake, a hundred or so of both sexes arrived safe in the Central World, and were hospitably received. So ill, however, did they behave that the Centralians were soon obliged to confine them to one spot, which was thenceforward called the earthly quarter. There is no doubt that the people thus complimented are the Portuguese, and that the earthquake is that which destroyed Lisbon; but the Centralians, otherwise so good, seem to have been indifferent chronologists, for the calamity of Portugal occurred in 1755, and Bruce's book was published in 1802, so that the lapse of a century is hard to make out. The use made of the foreign quarter in explaining the origin of evil in the Central World is this: the Centralians, though good are not incapable of sin, and hence some unlucky fellow, who strays into the unclean district may possibly be drawn into mischief.

The humility of the king is only one instance of the equality that prevails through the Central World. Wisdom and old age are alone treated with exceptional respect. The rapid increase of population, and the spontaneous productiveness of the soil, make the employment of servants unnecessary; and the abundance of metals and jewels, precious in the outward world, depriving them of their value, there is no aristocracy of wealth.

On entering the royal palace, Bruce was at once enabled to detect the king by his stature, which exceeded six feet, his majestic costume, and his snow-white beard, which descended to his waist. The turban of the monarch was of white satin, covered with feathers of the most beautiful colours, his jacket and petticoat were blue, and his robe was purple. Great Britain, it seems, enjoys a good character among the Centralians, for the king no sooner heard that Bruce was an Englishman than he congratulated him on his good fortune. "The Britons," said he, "were always a brave, generous, and free people, and never failed to reward merit whenever they discovered it." An invitation to dine with the monarch was a natural result of this favourable opinion, and Bruce had the pleasure of meeting at table a countryman named Thompson, who had distinguished himself in England as an honest lawyer, and who, having about a hundred years previously tumbled through one of the marshes of Lincolnshire or Essex, had thus reached the Central World, which had agreed so well with his constitution, that he did not look above forty years of age.

Crime being so extremely rare in the Central World, Bruce might deem himself particularly lucky when he heard in the palace that a trial was to take place on the following day, and that he would have an opportunity of witnessing it. Eight o'clock in the morning was the hour appointed for the judicial proceeding, and the persons who were to go with the king having assembled at an early hour in the palace, they all set off for the place of trial, which was a large field. On this occasion the king, who seated himself on an eminence raised for the purpose, with seventy of the oldest persons in the country ranged on each side of him, wore a black dress and turban, without the usual ornament of feathers.

As soon as the prisoner was brought before the court, the charge brought against him was formally stated by the king, who opened his discourse by averring that, although he had lived nearly four hundred years, this was the most painful moment he had ever experienced. He had known the prisoner from infancy, and could affirm that the life of the unhappy man had been blameless, until a silly curiosity had caused him to pay a visit to the foreign quarter, where he had remained for above a month. When on his way homeward, he began to fear that he had offended his father by his long absence; so he called upon a friend, who was the prosecutor in the case, and implored him to do his best as a well-wisher to the family. The friend, accordingly, waited on the father, but finding him somewhat sternly disposed, kept the returned wanderer at his house for some three weeks, continuing his solicitations in the mean time. A reconciliation was at last effected, but the unworthy prodigal was no sooner reconciled with his father, than he informed him that this very friend had persuaded him to remain so long absent, and had even caused him to visit the earthly quarter. He had also behaved in an indecorous manner towards his friend's daughter, a young lady who was of the tender age of thirty, and therefore quite unable to take her own part. All these facts made up a case of ingratitude: a crime which the Centralians regard with an abhorrence equal to that of the ancient Egyptians.

The prisoner pleading guilty, the king pronounced the sentence, which was to the effect, that he should be conducted back to the place from whence he came, and that after he had there had his hair and beard cut off, he was to be taken to the earthly quarter, never to leave it upon pain of death.

Shortly afterwards an express arrived from the earthly quarter, conveying the information that the inhabitants of that unblessed region, then increased to the number of two thousand, were all up in arms, and contemplated nothing less than the immediate destruction of the Central Empire. The evil design was thwarted: a sudden incursion proving so effectual, that the enemy was utterly disabled from wreaking further mischief. The banished man, on this occasion, exerted himself so heartily in the cause of his fellow-citizens, that he received a free pardon, and was allowed to return from exile.

One day, while he was walking in the fields, Bruce perceived in the air a dark body, about the size of half-a-crown, which was evidently descending from the earth above. When it had fallen, it proved, on closer inspection, to be a man who had treated him with base ingratitude prior to his departure from England. With the aid of the bottle of ointment he raised the man from the ground, forbidding him, in accordance with the lessons he had received, to embrace his knees. Mr. Worldly—so the man was named, no sooner recognised Bruce, than he showed the deepest contrition, and explained his unhappy situation by saying that he had fallen down a chasm in one of the Derbyshire mountains. In spite of all the care bestowed upon him, the miserable penitent expired in three days.

Bruce having learned from Worldly deceased that his relations had shown great grief at his supposed death, and would probably be charmed to see him, his repugnance to quit the Central World at the end of the year—which limited a stranger's right to dwell in that blest abode—was lessened, though he did not exactly see how his return to the upper regions was to be effected. As he had still two or three months on his hands, he thought he could not do better than pass them with the good old gentleman who had been so kind to him on his arrival. This wish he enunciated to the son, who, it will be remembered, was his travelling companion, and whom he found even more anxious than himself to quit the capital. The youth had that very day received a letter from a lady in his father's neighbourhood, accepting an offer of his hand, and was desirous to complete his happiness with all possible speed. Bruce, when returning to the residence of his

old friends, had thus an opportunity of witnessing a wedding ceremony remarkable for its unaffected simplicity. The father of the bride conducted his daughter into the middle of an assembly, and the same good office was done by the father of the bridegroom for his son. Hands were joined, fidelity was promised, and that was all. Let it not be forgotten by the present narrator that the bridegroom was dressed all in white, with the exception of his robe, which was sky-colour, and that he looked exceedingly smart.

At length the time for quitting the charming Central World, where nature was so kind, minds were so pure, and life was so long, was close at hand; the worthy old gentleman, informed by Bruce of his approaching departure, offered to be his companion. Leave having been taken of all good company, two very large birds, each with a long ribbon fastened to its back, were brought to the door on the appointed day, and on the backs of these Bruce and his venerable friend, who held the reins for both, ascended into the air. After a journey of about six hours Bruce arrived at the concave surface of the earth's crust, and his eyes were dazzled by the jewels with which it was studded; but soon the travellers were surrounded by a total darkness, and space was so confined that the birds were scarcely able to move their wings. This change was occasioned by the passage through the crust itself.

They reached the convex surface of the earth, within a few miles of London; and when Bruce was informed by his companion that he must now submit to have his eyes blinded for a while, in order that the entrance into the other world might remain a secret, of course he made no resistance, and after a quarter of an hour's more travel alighted on the ground; but when he opened his eyes the birds were gone. The effect of the ointment, which was to diminish the power of gravitation, was now found inconvenient, for the attraction of the earth being necessarily less at its surface than at its centre, Bruce could scarcely keep his feet to the ground, and got two or three tumbles on his nose. A certain liquid sprinkled upon him by his prudent friend soon, however, brought him to his proper weight.

Lovely as they were, the costumes of the Central World were, as we have seen, not in the London fashion; so Bruce's first thoughts were in the direction of an old acquaintance who lived in Piccadilly, and dealt in articles of attire. Thither the travellers proceeded. The effect of their appearance upon the unsophisticated maid-servant who opened the door was so powerful that she cried out, "A ghost! a ghost!" and, by her screams, brought her master down stairs. A sojourn in the immaculate Central World had not rendered Bruce incapable of earthly mendacity, so he told his Piccadilly friend, who recognised him at once, that he had been out masquerading: adding that his companion was a foreigner, who spoke no English, and that the long beard, which had excited remark, was in conformity to the custom of his country. The West-end tradesman lent Bruce a couple of guineas for immediate expenses, and asked him and his companion to dine with him on the following day.

As they are going to bed at the hotel after their dinner in Piccadilly, the old Centralian tells Bruce that he will return home on the following morning, and warning him not to quit his room earlier than usual, or pry into things that concern him not, takes an affectionate leave of him.

"May the Creator preserve you, and may you not trust mankind!" Those were the last words spoken by the good old man to Bruce, who when he was alone looked after his affairs. His relations received him kindly and settled a sum of money upon him—which was gratifying; but they refused to believe his account of the Central World—which was disgusting. So he resolved to keep as little company as possible, and bought a small cottage in Kent, where he settled down in the pleasing hope of receiving some day a promised visit from his Central acquaintance.

There the book ends. Whether Bruce is still in Kent, living on lingering hope, like Le Pauvre Jacques in the French play, or whether his hope has been realised, the present narrator is unable to say. Nay, what is more, he does not in the least believe that any one can give him the slightest information on the subject.

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THE MOONSTONE.

By the Author of "The Woman in White," &c. &c.

Second Period. The Discovery of the Truth. (1848—1849.)

Fifth Narrative.

The Story resumed by Franklin Blake.

CHAPTER I.

But few words are needed, on my part, to complete the narrative that has been presented in the Journal of Ezra Jennings.

Of myself, I have only to say that I awoke on the morning of the twenty-sixth, perfectly ignorant of all that I had said and done under the influence of the opium—from the time when the drug first laid its hold on me, to the time when I opened my eyes, on the sofa in Rachel's sitting-room.

Of what happened after my waking, I do not feel called upon to render an account in detail. Confining myself merely to results, I have to report that Rachel and I thoroughly understood each other, before a single word of explanation had passed on either side. I decline to account, and Rachel declines to account, for the extraordinary rapidity of our reconciliation. Sir and Madam, look back at the time when you were passionately attached to each other—and you will know what happened, after Ezra Jennings had shut the door of the sitting-room, as well as I know it myself.

I have, however, no objection to add, that we should have been certainly discovered by Mrs. Merridew, but for Rachel's presence of mind. She heard the sound of the old lady's dress in the corridor; and instantly ran out to meet her. I heard Mrs. Merridew say, "What is the matter?" and I heard Rachel answer, "The explosion!" Mrs. Merridew instantly permitted herself to be taken by the arm, and led into the garden, out of the way of the impending shock. On her return to the house, she met me in the hall, and expressed herself as greatly struck by the vast improvement in Science, since the time when she was a girl at school. "Explosions, Mr. Blake, are infinitely milder than they were. I assure you, I barely heard Mr. Jennings's explosion from the garden. And no smell afterwards, that I can detect, now we have come back to the house! I must really apologise to your medical friend. It is only due to him to say, that he has managed it beautifully!"

So, after vanquishing Betteredge and Mr. Bruff, Ezra Jennings vanquished Mrs. Merridew herself. There is a great deal of undeveloped liberal feeling in the world, after all!

At breakfast, Mr. Bruff made no secret of his reasons for wishing that I should accompany him to London by the morning train. The watch kept at the bank, and the result which might yet come of it, appealed so irresistibly to Rachel's curiosity, that she at once decided (if Mrs. Merridew had no objection) on accompanying us back to town—so as to be within reach of the earliest news of our proceedings.

Mrs. Merridew proved to be all pliability and indulgence, after the truly considerate manner in which the explosion had conducted itself; and Betteredge was accordingly informed that we were all four to travel back together by the morning train. I fully expected that he would have asked leave to accompany us. But Rachel had wisely provided her faithful old servant with an occupation that interested him. He was charged with completing the refurnishing of the house, and was too full of his domestic responsibilities to feel the "detective-fever" as he might have felt it, under other circumstances.

Our one subject of regret, in going [illegible] London, was the necessity of parting, [illegible] abruptly than we could have wished, with [illegible] Jennings. It was impossible to persuade [illegible] accompany us. I could only promise to [illegible] him—and Rachel could only insist on h[illegible] to see her when she returned to [illegible] There was every prospect of our me[illegible] in a few months—and yet there wa[illegible] very sad in seeing our best and [illegible] left standing alone on the platfor[illegible] moved out of the station.

On our arrival in London, Mr [illegible] costed at the terminus by a sm[illegible] in a jacket and trousers of t[illegible] cloth, and personally remark[illegible] the extraordinary prominence [illegible] projected so far, and they rolle[illegible] that you wondered uneasily w[illegible] in their sockets. After liste[illegible] Mr. Bruff asked the ladies wh[illegible] excuse our accompanying th[illegible]

land Place. I had barely time to promise Rachel that I would return, and tell her everything that had happened, before Mr. Bruff seized me by the arm, and hurried me into a cab. The boy with the ill-secured eyes, took his place on the box by the driver, and the driver was directed to go to Lombard-street.

"News from the bank?" I asked, as we started.

"News of Mr. Luker," said Mr. Bruff. "An hour ago, he was seen to leave his house at Lambeth, in a cab, accompanied by two men, who were recognised by *my* men as police officers in plain clothes. If Mr. Luker's dread of the Indians is at the bottom of this precaution, the inference is plain enough. He is going to take the Diamond out of the bank."

"And we are going to the bank to see what comes of it?"

"Yes—or to hear what has come of it, if it is all over by this time. Did you notice my boy —on the box, there?"

"I noticed his eyes!"

Mr. Bruff laughed. "They call the poor little wretch 'Gooseberry,' at the office," he said. "I employ him to go on errands—and I only wish my clerks who have nick-named him, were as thoroughly to be depended on as he is. Gooseberry is one of the sharpest boys in London, Mr. Blake, in spite of his eyes."

It was twenty minutes to five, when we drew up before the bank in Lombard-street. Gooseberry looked longingly at his master, as he opened the cab door.

"Do you want to come in too?" asked Mr. Bruff kindly. "Come in then, and keep at my heels till further orders. He's as quick as lightning," pursued Mr. Bruff, addressing me in a whisper. "Two words will do with Gooseberry, where twenty would be wanted with another boy."

We entered the bank. The outer office—with the long counter, behind which the cashiers [torn]t—was crowded with people; all waiting their [torn]n to take money out, or to pay money in, [torn]e the bank closed at five o'clock.

[torn] men among the crowd approached Mr. [torn]s soon as he showed himself.

[torn]," asked the lawyer. "Have you seen

[torn]sed us here half an hour since, sir, [torn] into the inner office."

[torn]ot come out again yet?"

[torn]rned to me. "Let us wait," he

[torn]d among the people about me [torn]dians. Not a sign of them was [torn]ere. The only person present [torn]y dark complexion was a tall [torn]oat, and a round hat, who [torn]. Could this be one of them [torn]ossible! The man was taller [torn]dians; and his face, where it [torn]y a bushy black beard, was [torn]f any of their faces at least. [torn] their spy somewhere," said Mr. Bruff, looking at the dark sailor in his turn. "And he may be the man."

Before he could say any more, his coat tail was respectfully pulled by his attendant sprite with the gooseberry eyes. Mr. Bruff looked where the boy was looking. "Hush!" he said. "Here is Mr. Luker!"

The money-lender came out from the inner regions of the bank, followed by his two guardian policemen in plain clothes.

"Keep your eye on him," whispered Mr. Bruff. "If he passes the Diamond to anybody, he will pass it here."

Without noticing either of us, Mr. Luker slowly made his way to the door—now in the thickest, now in the thinnest part of the crowd. I distinctly saw his hand move, as he passed a short, stout man, respectably dressed in a suit of sober grey. The man started a little, and looked after him. Mr. Luker moved on slowly through the crowd. At the door, his guard placed themselves on either side of him. They were all three followed by one of Mr. Bruff's two men—and I saw them no more.

I looked round at the lawyer, and then looked significantly towards the man in the suit of sober grey. "Yes!" whispered Mr. Bruff, "I saw it too!" He turned about, in search of his second man. The second man was nowhere to be seen. He looked behind him for his attendant sprite. Gooseberry had disappeared.

"What the devil does it mean!" said Mr. Bruff angrily. "They have both left us at the very time when we want them most."

It came to the turn of the man in the grey suit to transact his business at the counter. He paid in a cheque—received a receipt for it—and turned to go out.

"What is to be done?" asked Mr. Bruff. "*We* can't degrade ourselves by following him."

"*I* can!" I said. "I wouldn't lose sight of that man for ten thousand pounds!"

"In that case," rejoined Mr. Bruff, "I wouldn't lose sight of *you*, for twice the money. A nice occupation for a man in my position," he muttered to himself, as we followed the stranger out of the bank. "For Heaven's sake, don't mention it! I should be ruined if it was known."

The man in the grey suit got into an omnibus going westward. We got in after him. There were latent reserves of youth still left in Mr. Bruff. I assert it positively—when he took his seat in the omnibus, he blushed!

The man with the grey suit stopped the omnibus, and got out in Oxford Street. We followed him again. He went into a chemist's shop.

Mr. Bruff started. "My chemist!" he exclaimed. "I am afraid we have made a mistake."

We entered the shop. Mr. Bruff and the proprietor exchanged a few words in private. The lawyer joined me again, with a very crestfallen face.

"It's greatly to our credit," he said, as he

took my arm, and led me out—"that's one comfort!"

"What is to our credit?" I asked.

"Mr. Blake! you and I are the two worst amateur detectives that ever tried their hands at the trade. The man in the grey suit has been thirty years in the chemist's service. He was sent to the bank to pay money to his master's account—and he knows no more of the Moonstone than the babe unborn."

I asked what was to be done next.

"Come back to my office," said Mr. Bruff. "Gooseberry, and my second man, have evidently followed somebody else. Let us hope that *they* had their eyes about them at any rate!"

When we reached Gray's Inn Square, the second man had arrived there before us. He had been waiting for more than a quarter of an hour.

"Well!" asked Mr. Bruff. "What's your news?'

"I am sorry to say, sir," replied the man, "that I have made a mistake. I could have taken my oath that I saw Mr. Luker pass something to an elderly gentleman, in a light-coloured paletot. The elderly gentleman turns out, sir, to be a most respectable master iron-monger in Eastcheap."

"Where is Gooseberry?" asked Mr. Bruff resignedly.

The man stared. "I don't know, sir. I have seen nothing of him since I left the bank."

Mr. Bruff dismissed the man. "One of two things," he said to me. "Either Gooseberry has run away, or he is hunting on his own account. What do you say to dining here, on the chance that the boy may come back in an hour or two? I have got some good wine in the cellar, and we can get a chop from the coffee-house."

We dined at Mr. Bruff's chambers. Before the cloth was removed, "a person" was announced as wanting to speak to the lawyer. Was the person, Gooseberry? No: only the man who had been employed to follow Mr. Luker when he left the bank.

The report, in this case, presented no feature of the slightest interest. Mr. Luker had gone back to his own house, and had there dismissed his guard. He had not gone out again afterwards. Towards dusk, the shutters had been put up, and the doors had been bolted. The street before the house, and the alley behind the house, had been carefully watched. No signs of the Indians had been visible. No person whatever had been seen loitering about the premises. Having stated these facts, the man waited to know whether there were any further orders. Mr. Bruff dismissed him for the night.

"Do you think Mr. Luker has taken the Moonstone home with him?" I asked.

"Not he," said Mr. Bruff. "He would never have dismissed his two policemen, if he had run the risk of keeping the Diamond in his own house again."

We waited another half hour for the boy, and waited in vain. It was then time for Mr. Bruff to go to Hampstead, and for me to return to Rachel in Portland Place. I left my card, in charge of the porter at the chambers, with a line written on it to say that I should be at my lodgings at half past ten, that night. The card was to be given to the boy, if the boy came back.

Some men have a knack of keeping appointments; and other men have a knack of missing them. I am one of the other men. Add to this, that I passed the evening at Portland Place, on the same seat with Rachel, in a room forty feet long, with Mrs. Merridew at the further end of it. Does anybody wonder that I got home at half past twelve instead of half past ten? How thoroughly heartless that person must be! And how earnestly I hope I may never make that person's acquaintance!

My servant handed me a morsel of paper when he let me in.

I read, in a neat legal handwriting, these words:—"If you please, sir, I am getting sleepy. I will come back to-morrow morning, between nine and ten." Inquiry proved that a boy, with very extraordinary-looking eyes, had called, had presented my card and message, had waited an hour, had done nothing but fall asleep and wake up again, had written a line for me, and had gone home—after gravely informing the servant that "he was fit for nothing unless he got his night's rest."

At nine, the next morning, I was ready for my visitor. At half past nine, I heard steps outside my door. "Come in, Gooseberry!" I called out. "Thank you, sir," answered a grave and melancholy voice. The door opened. I started to my feet, and confronted—Sergeant Cuff!

"I thought I would look in here, Mr. Blake, on the chance of your being in town, before I wrote to Yorkshire," said the Sergeant.

He was as dreary and as lean as ever. His eyes had not lost their old trick (so subtly noticed in Betteredge's Narrative) of "looking as if they expected something more from you than you were aware of yourself." But, so far as dress can alter a man, the great Cuff was changed beyond all recognition. He wore a broad-brimmed white hat, a light shooting jacket, white trousers, and drab gaiters. He carried a stout oak stick. His whole aim and object seemed to be, to look as if he had lived in the country all his life. When I complimented him on his Metamorphosis, he declined to take it as a joke. He complained, quite gravely, of the noises and the smells of London. I declare I am far from sure that he did not speak with a slightly rustic accent! I offered him breakfast. The innocent countryman was quite shocked. *His* breakfast-hour was half past six —and *he* went to bed with the cocks and hens!

"I only got back from Ireland last night," said the Sergeant, coming round to the practical object of his visit, in his own impenetrable manner. "Before I went to bed, I read

your letter, telling me what has happened since my inquiry after the Diamond was suspended last year. There's only one thing to be said about the matter, on my side. I completely mistook my case. How any man living was to have seen things in their true light, in such a situation as mine was at the time, I don't profess to know. But that doesn't alter the facts as they stand. I own that I made a mess of it. Not the first mess, Mr. Blake, which has distinguished my professional career! It's only in books that the officers of the detective force are superior to the weakness of making a mistake."

"You have come in the nick of time to recover your reputation," I said.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Blake," rejoined the Sergeant. "Now I have retired from business, I don't care a straw about my reputation. I have done with my reputation, thank God! I am here, sir, in grateful remembrance of the late Lady Verinder's liberality to me. I will go back to my old work—if you want me, and if you will trust me—on that consideration, and on no other. Not a farthing of money is to pass, if you please, from you to me. This is on honour. Now tell me, Mr. Blake, how the case stands since you wrote to me last."

I told him of the experiment with the opium, and of what had occurred afterwards at the bank in Lombard Street. He was greatly struck by the experiment—it was something entirely new in his experience. And he was particularly interested in the theory of Ezra Jennings, relating to what I had done with the Diamond, after I had left Rachel's sitting-room, on the birthday night.

"I don't hold with Mr. Jennings that you hid the Moonstone," said Sergeant Cuff. "But I agree with him, that you must certainly have taken it back to your own room."

"Well?" I asked. "And what happened then?"

"Have you no suspicion yourself of what happened, sir?"

"None whatever."

"Has Mr. Bruff no suspicion?"

"No more than I have."

Sergeant Cuff rose, and went to my writing-table. He came back with a sealed envelope. It was marked "Private;" it was addressed to me; and it had the Sergeant's signature in the corner.

"I suspected the wrong person, last year," he said; "and I may be suspecting the wrong person now. Wait to open the envelope, Mr. Blake, till you have got at the truth. And then compare the name of the guilty person, with the name that I have written in that sealed letter."

I put the letter into my pocket—and then asked for the Sergeant's opinion of the measures which we had taken at the bank.

"Very well intended, sir," he answered, "and quite the right thing to do. But there was another person who ought to have been looked after, besides Mr. Luker."

"The person named in the letter you have just given to me?"

"Yes, Mr. Blake, the person named in the letter. It can't be helped now. I shall have something to propose to you and Mr. Bruff, sir, when the time comes. Let's wait, first, and see if the boy has anything to tell us that is worth hearing."

It was close on ten o'clock, and the boy had not yet made his appearance. Sergeant Cuff talked of other matters. He asked after his old friend Betteredge, and his old enemy the gardener. In a minute more, he would no doubt have got from this, to the subject of his favourite roses, if my servant had not interrupted us by announcing that the boy was below.

On being brought into the room, Gooseberry stopped at the threshold of the door, and looked distrustfully at the stranger who was in my company. I called to the boy to come to me.

"You may speak before this gentleman," I said. "He is here to assist me; and he knows all that has happened. Sergeant Cuff," I added, "this is the boy from Mr. Bruff's office."

In our modern system of civilisation, celebrity (no matter of what kind) is the lever that will move anything. The fame of the great Cuff had even reached the ears of the small Gooseberry. The boy's ill-fixed eyes rolled, when I mentioned the illustrious name, till I thought they really must have dropped on the carpet.

"Come here, my lad," said the Sergeant, "and let's hear what you have got to tell us."

The notice of the great man—the hero of many a famous story in every lawyer's office in London—appeared to fascinate the boy. He placed himself in front of Sergeant Cuff, and put his hands behind him, after the approved fashion of a neophyte who is examined in his catechism.

"What is your name?" said the Sergeant, beginning with the first question in the catechism.

"Octavius Guy," answered the boy. "They call me Gooseberry at the office, because of my eyes."

"Octavius Guy, otherwise Gooseberry," pursued the Sergeant, with the utmost gravity, "you were missed at the bank yesterday. What were you about?"

"If you please, sir, I was following a man."

"Who was he?"

"A tall man, sir, with a big black beard, dressed like a sailor."

"I remember the man!" I broke in. "Mr. Bruff and I thought he was a spy, employed by the Indians."

Sergeant Cuff did not appear to be much impressed by what Mr. Bruff and I had thought. He went on catechising Gooseberry.

"Well?" he said—"and why did you follow the sailor?"

"If you please, sir, Mr. Bruff wanted to know whether Mr. Luker passed anything to anybody on his way out of the bank. I saw

Mr. Luker pass something to the sailor with the black beard."

"Why didn't you tell Mr. Bruff what you saw?"

"I hadn't time to tell anybody, sir, the sailor went out in such a hurry."

"And you ran out after him—eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"Gooseberry," said the Sergeant, patting his head, "you have got something in that small skull of yours—and it isn't cotton-wool. I am greatly pleased with you, so far."

The boy blushed with pleasure. Sergeant Cuff went on.

"Well? and what did the sailor do, when he got into the street?"

"He called a cab, sir."

"And what did you do?"

"Held on behind, and run after it."

Before the Sergeant could put his next question, another visitor was announced—the head clerk from Mr. Bruff's office.

Feeling the importance of not interrupting Sergeant Cuff's examination of the boy, I received the clerk in another room. He came with bad news of his employer. The agitation and excitement of the last two days had proved too much for Mr. Bruff. He had awoke that morning with an attack of gout; he was confined to his room at Hampstead; and, in the present critical condition of our affairs, he was very uneasy at being compelled to leave me without the advice and assistance of an experienced person. The chief clerk had received orders to hold himself at my disposal, and was willing to do his best to replace Mr. Bruff.

I wrote at once to quiet the old gentleman's mind, by telling him of Sergeant Cuff's visit: adding that Gooseberry was at that moment under examination; and promising to inform Mr. Bruff, either personally or by letter, of whatever might occur later in the day. Having despatched the clerk to Hampstead with my note, I returned to the room which I had left, and found Sergeant Cuff at the fireplace, in the act of ringing the bell.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Blake," said the Sergeant. "I was just going to send word by your servant that I wanted to speak to you. There isn't a doubt on my mind that this boy—this most meritorious boy," added the Sergeant, patting Gooseberry on the head, "has followed the right man. Precious time has been lost, sir, through your unfortunately not being at home at half past ten last night. The only thing to do, now, is to send for a cab immediately."

In five minutes more, Sergeant Cuff and I (with Gooseberry on the box to guide the driver) were on our way eastward, towards the City.

"One of these days," said the Sergeant, pointing through the front window of the cab, "that boy will do great things in my late profession. He is the brightest and cleverest little chap I have met with, for many a long year past. You shall hear the substance, Mr. Blake, of what he told me while you were out of the room. You were present, I think, when he mentioned that he held on behind the cab, and ran after it?"

"Yes."

"Well, sir, the cab went from Lombard Street to the Tower Wharf. The sailor with the black beard got out, and spoke to the steward of the Rotterdam steamboat, which was to start the next morning. He asked if he could be allowed to go on board at once, and sleep in his berth over-night. The steward said, No. The cabins, and berths, and bedding were all to have a thorough cleaning that evening, and no passenger could be allowed to come on board, before the morning. The sailor turned round, and left the wharf. When he got into the street again, the boy noticed for the first time, a man dressed like a respectable mechanic, walking on the opposite side of the road, and apparently keeping the sailor in view. The sailor stopped at an eating-house in the neighbourhood, and went in. The boy—not being able to make up his mind, at the moment—hung about among some other boys, staring at the good things in the eating-house window. He noticed the mechanic, waiting, as he himself was waiting—but still on the opposite side of the street. After a minute, a cab came by slowly, and stopped where the mechanic was standing. The boy could only see plainly one person in the cab, who leaned forward at the window to speak to the mechanic. He described that person, Mr. Blake, without any prompting from me, as having a dark face, like the face of an Indian."

It was plain, by this time, that Mr. Bruff and I had made another mistake. The sailor with the black beard was clearly not a spy in the service of the Indian conspiracy. Was he, by any possibility, the man who had got the Diamond?

"After a little," pursued the Sergeant, "the cab moved on slowly down the street. The mechanic crossed the road, and went into the eating-house. The boy waited outside till he was hungry and tired—and then went into the eating-house, in his turn. He had a shilling in his pocket; and he dined sumptuously, he tells me, on a black-pudding, an eel-pie, and a bottle of ginger-beer. What can a boy *not* digest? The substance in question has never been found yet."

"What did he see in the eating-house?" I asked.

"Well, Mr. Blake, he saw the sailor reading the newspaper at one table, and the mechanic reading the newspaper at another. It was dusk before the sailor got up, and left the place. He looked about him suspiciously when he got out into the street. The boy—*being* a boy—passed unnoticed. The mechanic had not come out yet. The sailor walked on, looking about him, and apparently not very certain of where he was going next. The mechanic appeared once more, on the opposite side of the road. The sailor went on, till he got to Shore Lane, leading into

Lower Thames Street. There he stopped before a public-house, under the sign of The Wheel of Fortune, and, after examining the place outside, went in. Gooseberry went in too. There were a great many people, mostly of the decent sort, at the bar. The Wheel of Fortune is a very respectable house, Mr. Blake; famous for its porter and pork-pies."

The Sergeant's digressions irritated me. He saw it; and confined himself more strictly to Gooseberry's evidence when he went on.

"The sailor," he resumed, "asked if he could have a bed. The landlord said 'No; they were full.' The barmaid corrected him, and said 'Number Ten was empty.' A waiter was sent for to show the sailor to Number Ten. Just before that, Gooseberry had noticed the mechanic among the people at the bar. Before the waiter had answered the call, the mechanic had vanished. The sailor was taken off to his room. Not knowing what to do next, Gooseberry had the wisdom to wait and see if anything happened. Something did happen. The landlord was called for. Angry voices were heard up-stairs. The mechanic suddenly made his appearance again, collared by the landlord, and exhibiting, to Gooseberry's great surprise, all the signs and tokens of being drunk. The landlord thrust him out at the door, and threatened him with the police if he came back. From the altercation between them, while this was going on, it appeared that the man had been discovered in Number Ten, and had declared with drunken obstinacy that he had taken the room. Gooseberry was so struck by this sudden intoxication of a previously sober person, that he couldn't resist running out after the mechanic into the street. As long as he was in sight of the public house, the man reeled about in the most disgraceful manner. The moment he turned the corner of the street, he recovered his balance instantly, and became as sober a member of society as you could wish to see. Gooseberry went back to The Wheel of Fortune, in a very bewildered state of mind. He waited about again, on the chance of something happening. Nothing happened; and nothing more was to be heard, or seen, of the sailor. Gooseberry decided on going back to the office. Just as he came to this conclusion, who should appear, on the opposite side of the street as usual, but the mechanic again! He looked up at one particular window at the top of the public-house, which was the only one that had a light in it. The light seemed to relieve his mind. He left the place directly. The boy made his way back to Gray's Inn—got your card and message—called—and failed to find you. There you have the state of the case, Mr. Blake, as it stands at the present time."

"What is your own opinion of the case, Sergeant?"

"I think it's serious, sir. Judging by what the boy saw, the Indians are in it, to begin with."

"Yes. And the sailor is evidently the man to whom Mr. Luker passed the Diamond. It seems odd that Mr. Bruff, and I, and the man in Mr. Bruff's employment, should all have been mistaken about who the person was."

"Not at all, Mr. Blake. Considering the risk that person ran, it's likely enough that Mr. Luker purposely misled you, by previous arrangement between them."

"Do you understand the proceedings at the public-house?" I asked. "The man dressed like a mechanic, was acting of course in the employment of the Indians. But I am as much puzzled to account for his sudden assumption of drunkenness as Gooseberry himself."

"I think I can give a guess at what it means, sir," said the Sergeant. "If you will reflect, you will see that the man must have had some pretty strict instructions from the Indians. They were far too noticeable themselves to risk being seen at the bank, or in the public-house—they were obliged to trust everything to their deputy. Very good. Their deputy hears a certain number named, in the public-house, as the number of the room which the sailor is to have for the night—that being also the room (unless our notion is all wrong) which the Diamond is to have for the night, too. Under those circumstances, the Indians, you may rely on it, would insist on having a description of the room—of its position in the house, of its capability of being approached from the outside, and so on. What was the man to do, with such orders as these? Just what he did! He ran up-stairs to get a look at the room, before the sailor was taken into it. He was found there, making his observations—and he shammed drunk, as the easiest way of getting out of the difficulty. That's how I read the riddle. After he was turned out of the public-house, he probably went with his report, to the place where his employers were waiting for him. And his employers, no doubt, sent him back to make sure that the sailor was really settled at the public-house till the next morning. As for what happened at The Wheel of Fortune, after the boy left—we ought to have discovered that last night. It's eleven in the morning, now. We must hope for the best, and find out what we can."

In a quarter of an hour more, the cab stopped in Shore Lane, and Gooseberry opened the door for us to get out.

"All right?" asked the Sergeant.

"All right," answered the boy.

The moment we entered The Wheel of Fortune, it was plain even to my inexperienced eyes that there was something wrong in the house.

The only person behind the counter at which the liquors were served, was a bewildered servant girl, perfectly ignorant of the business. One or two customers, waiting for their morning drink, were tapping impatiently on the counter with their money. The barmaid appeared from the inner regions of the parlour, excited and pre-occupied. She answered Sergeant Cuff's inquiry for the landlord, by telling

him sharply that her master was up-stairs, and was not to be bothered by anybody.

"Come along with me, sir," said Sergeant Cuff, coolly leading the way up-stairs, and beckoning to the boy to follow him.

The barmaid called to her master, and warned him that strangers were intruding themselves into the house. On the first floor we were encountered by the landlord, hurrying down, in a highly irritated state, to see what was the matter.

"Who the devil are you? and what do you want here?" he asked.

"Keep your temper," said the Sergeant, quietly. "I'll tell you who I am, to begin with. I am Sergeant Cuff."

The illustrious name instantly produced its effect. The angry landlord threw open the door of a sitting-room, and asked the Sergeant's pardon.

"I am annoyed and out of sorts, sir—that's the truth," he said. "Something unpleasant has happened in the house this morning. A man in my way of business has a deal to upset his temper, Sergeant Cuff."

"Not a doubt of it," said the Sergeant. "I'll come at once, if you will allow me, to what brings us here. This gentleman and I want to trouble you with a few inquiries, on a matter of some interest to both of us."

"Relating to what, sir?" asked the landlord.

"Relating to a dark man, dressed like a sailor, who slept here last night."

"Good God! that's the man who is upsetting the whole house at this moment!" exclaimed the landlord. "Do you, or does this gentleman, know anything about him?"

"We can't be certain till we see him," answered the Sergeant.

"See him?" echoed the landlord. "That's the one thing that nobody has been able to do since seven o'clock this morning. That was the time when he left word, last night, that he was to be called. He *was* called—and there was no getting an answer from him, and no opening his door to see what was the matter. They tried again at eight, and they tried again at nine. No use! There was the door still locked —and not a sound to be heard in the room! I have been out this morning—and I only got back a quarter of an hour ago. I have hammered at the door myself—and all to no purpose. The potboy has gone to fetch a carpenter. If you can wait a few minutes, gentlemen, we will have the door opened, and see what it means."

"Was the man drunk last night?" asked Sergeant Cuff.

"Perfectly sober, sir—or I would never have let him sleep in my house."

"Did he pay for his bed beforehand?"

"No."

"Could he leave the room in any way, without going out by the door?"

"The room is a garret," said the landlord. "But there's a trap-door in the ceiling, leading out on to the roof—and a little lower down the street, there's an empty house under repair. Do you think, Sergeant, the blackguard has got off in that way, without paying?"

"A sailor," said Sergeant Cuff, "might have done it—early in the morning, before the street was astir. He would be used to climbing, and his head wouldn't fail him on the roofs of the houses."

As he spoke, the arrival of the carpenter was announced. We all went up-stairs, at once, to the top story. I noticed that the Sergeant was unusually grave, even for *him*. It also struck me as odd that he told the boy (after having previously encouraged him to follow us), to wait in the room below till we came down again.

The carpenter's hammer and chisel disposed of the resistance of the door in a few minutes. But some article of furniture had been placed against it inside, as a barricade. By pushing at the door, we thrust this obstacle aside, and so got admission to the room. The landlord entered first; the Sergeant second; and I third. The other persons present followed us.

We all looked towards the bed, and all started.

The man had not left the room. He lay, dressed, on the bed—with a white pillow over his face, which completely hid it from view.

"What does that mean?" said the landlord, pointing to the pillow.

Sergeant Cuff led the way to the bed, without answering, and removed the pillow.

The man's swarthy face was placid and still; his black hair and beard were slightly, very slightly, discomposed. His eyes stared wide open, glassy and vacant, at the ceiling. The filmy look and the fixed expression of them horrified me. I turned away, and went to the open window. The rest of them remained, where Sergeant Cuff remained, at the bed.

"He's in a fit!" I heard the landlord say.

"He's dead," the Sergeant answered. "Send for the nearest doctor, and send for the police."

The waiter was despatched on both errands. Some strange fascination seemed to hold Sergeant Cuff to the bed. Some strange curiosity seemed to keep the rest of them waiting, to see what the Sergeant would do next.

I turned again to the window. The moment afterwards, I felt a soft pull at my coat-tails, and a small voice whispered, "Look here, sir!"

Gooseberry had followed us into the room. His loose eyes rolled frightfully—not in terror, but in exultation. He had made a detective-discovery on his own account. "Look here, sir," he repeated—and led me to a table in a corner of the room.

On the table stood a little wooden box, open, and empty. On one side of the box lay some jewellers' cotton. On the other side, was a torn sheet of white paper, with a seal on it, partly destroyed, and with an inscription in writing, which was still perfectly legible. The inscription was in these words.

"Deposited with Messrs. Bushe, Lysaught, and Bushe, by Mr. Septimus Luker, of Middle-

sex Place, Lambeth, a small wooden box, sealed up in this envelope, and containing a valuable of great price. The box, when claimed, to be only given up by Messrs. Bushe and Co. on the personal application of Mr. Luker."

Those lines removed all further doubt, on one point at least. The sailor had been in possession of the Moonstone, when he had left the bank on the previous day.

I felt another pull at my coat-tails. Gooseberry had not done with me yet.

"Robbery!" whispered the boy, pointing, in high delight, to the empty box.

"You were told to wait down-stairs," I said. "Go away!"

"And Murder!" added Gooseberry, pointing, with a keener relish still, to the man on the bed.

There was something so hideous in the boy's enjoyment of the horror of the scene, that I took him by the two shoulders and put him out of the room.

At the moment when I crossed the threshold of the door, I heard Sergeant Cuff's voice, asking where I was. He met me, as I returned into the room, and forced me to go back with him to the bedside.

"Mr. Blake!" he said. "Look at the man's face. It is a face disguised—and here's the proof of it!"

He traced with his finger a thin line of livid white, running backward from the dead man's forehead, between the swarthy complexion, and the slightly-disturbed black hair. "Let's see what is under this," said the Sergeant, suddenly seizing the black hair, with a firm grip of his hand.

My nerves were not strong enough to bear it. I turned away again from the bed.

The first sight that met my eyes, at the other end of the room, was the irrepressible Gooseberry, perched on a chair, and looking with breathless interest, over the heads of his elders, at the Sergeant's proceedings.

"He's pulling off his wig!" whispered Gooseberry, compassionating my position, as the only person in the room who could see nothing.

There was a pause—and then a cry of astonishment among the people round the bed.

"He's pulled off his beard!" cried Gooseberry.

There was another pause. Sergeant Cuff asked for something. The landlord went to the washhand-stand, and returned to the bed with a basin of water and a towel.

Gooseberry danced with excitement on the chair. "Come up here, along with me, sir! He's washing off his complexion now!"

The Sergeant suddenly burst his way through the people about him, and came, with horror in his face, straight to the place where I was standing.

"Come back to the bed, sir!" he began. He looked at me closer, and checked himself. "No!" he resumed. "Open the sealed letter first—the letter I gave you this morning."

I opened the letter.

"Read the name, Mr. Blake, that I have written inside."

I read the name that he had written. It was —*Godfrey Ablewhite.*

"Now," said the Sergeant, "come with me, and look at the man on the bed."

I went with him, and looked at the man on the bed.

GODFREY ABLEWHITE!

BEAVERS.

THE colour of the skin is the origin of the name of this mammal, which varies from buff to chesnut-brown. Beavers have, though rarely, been found with black and blueish and white and spotted furs. The beaver, according to Buffon, ranges over forty degrees of latitude, from twenty to sixty, and is black in the cold north, and straw-coloured in warmer climates. The fine fur is of an uniform brown, about half an inch long; but the coarse hairs, about two inches long, are generally chesnut; and they determine the colour of the pelt. The glossy-black beavers occur but rarely in high northern latitudes, about a dozen a year being seen at a factory in Hudson's Bay, where a white beaver may be seen once in twenty years. Mr. Samuel Hearne saw a pelt of this kind which had brown and reddish hairs along the ridge of the back, whilst the belly was silvery white. Prince Maximilian once saw a beaver beautifully spotted with white, and he says pure and yellowish white beavers are not unfrequently caught on the Yellowstone River.

Beavers, says Buffon, form the link between the quadrupeds and the fishes, as the bat is the link between the quadrupeds and the birds. Beavers are gnawers, rodents, with two large cutting teeth, which are separated from the grinders by an empty space. The foreparts of the beavers adapt them to the land, their hind-parts for the water, their small forepaws with five long toes serving them as hands, and their larger webbed hindfeet acting as paddles. As for the fishy scaly tail, which is often in the water whilst the body is out of it, opinions differ respecting its functions, being somewhat by turns of a rudder, a trowel, and an alarum. A large beaver may weigh some fifty or sixty pounds, and it may be about three feet long from the point of the snout to the tip of the tail; one foot being the length of the appendage.

A hundred years ago M. Buffon received a present of a young beaver. Buffon (who said the style is the man) attired himself in full dress, peruke, and ruffles, before sitting down to write a sort of prose in full dress, in which he has left us an account of the beaver he kept. He does not appear to have done unto his beaver as he would have been done unto; and therefore the poor prisoner, though gentle, peaceable, and familiar, is described as melancholy and plaintive. If Buffon had known more about beavers, or if he had considered his pet more carefully, he would have learned that it was something more than a

desire for liberty which led the beaver to gnaw everything which came in his way. The door-posts of his prison suffered from his incisors. The cask in which he was brought from Canada had to be double-lined with tin. Once, he escaped. He had enjoyed the natural and genial luxury of a bath. Nine months old before he was put into it, this young beaver was at first afraid of water, but soon liked it; and when he was missed he came towards the torches of the men sent to search for him, swimming through the water in the vaults of the Garden of Plants.

The Indian and French Canadian trappers who supplied Buffon's correspondents and informants with the materials for his romance of the beaver were credulous men living still in the ages of faith. Indeed, our knowledge of the beaver is still but transitive towards the ages of science. There is a real obstacle in the way of a correct knowledge of his habits, for besides being timid and wary and out-of-the-way, he works by night. Tame beavers never seem to have been kept in conditions natural enough to them, solitary, sequestered, and secluded, for the exhibition of their instincts and intelligence. If caught very young the Indian women nurse them until they are from three to six weeks old, when they wean themselves and eat bark and twigs. The cry of a beaver a few days old, is deceivingly like the cry of an infant. A trapper in the Rocky Mountains heard a cry which he felt sure was the wail of a child. Fearing the presence of an Indian camp, he crept cautiously through the cotton wood towards the bank of the river, where he saw two young beavers on a low bank of earth near the water, crying for their mother; and this absent mother he found in one of his traps.

Mr. L. H. Morgan, to whose work on the American beaver we are indebted for most of the novel information which may be found in this essay, was once at an Indian lodge near the mouth of the Yellowstone River. He saw there, a young beaver lapping milk out of a saucer while an Indian child was pulling its fur. It was only after hearing it several times, that he observed the crying to come from the beaver and not from the baby. Although active and mischievous, young beavers are harmless, affectionate, and easily domesticated. A Missouri trapper told Mr. L. H. Morgan that an Indian woman, the wife of his partner, having nursed a beaver, when it grew up it followed them in all their trapping rounds for several years. They often shifted their camp and went long distances; and when they began breaking up their camp, the beaver understood what they were doing, and showed by unmistakable signs his desire to accompany them. Wherever they stopped, he fed himself upon bark; but he would eat their food as well, and especially their sugar. If he saw sugar, he was troublesome until he got some of it. The half-blood boy with whom he was nursed and brought up, was his greatest friend, and he would follow him, anywhere and everywhere. This beaver was the pet of the trappers' camp. When they were about to travel, two packs were fastened upon a horse and he was mounted between them, riding in this way many miles and many times.

But no beaver story surpasses one which appeared in this journal, Number 278, August 20, 1864. This beaver was caught young in a box trap baited with an apple. He was the only survivor of a community. His favourite food was bread and milk sweetened. Brownie would, it is said, follow his master by day along brooks and rivers; and even swim after the steamboat in which his master was a passenger in Lake Champlain, Canada—a lake a hundred miles long, and six miles broad—always knowing where to land, and sleeping on his master's valise or at his feet in bed in the hotels. Of course, he felt sure of a treat of sweetened bread and milk, or of apples, to reward his toil. Swimming being easier than walking to beavers, they are more likely to follow those they are fond of, by water, than on land.

Tales of travellers go so far as to say that tame beavers have been trained to catch fish. M. Kalm says he has seen beavers in America accompanying their masters in boats, jump into the water, and in a moment after return with a fish. M. Gmelin says he saw a tame male beaver in a Siberian village who brought home female beavers to live with him in domesticity. Although these statements have been long before the world, they still await confirmation. Travellers who have extraordinary things to tell, cannot be reminded too often of the necessity of backing them with extraordinary proofs.

Fossils both of American and of European beavers have been found. The American and European beavers seem to be varieties of the same species; but systematic zoologists differ respecting the large fossil Trogontherium (gnawing beast). The remains were first found on the borders of the sea of Azof, and afterwards in England. The Trogontherium was about one-fifth larger than the European beaver. Casteroïdes (beaver-like) is the name given to a gigantic fossil beaver, first found in lake formations in Wayne county, New York. He must have been five or six times larger than the beaver of the present day, and the largest of all extinct or existing rodents.

The anatomical peculiarities of the rodents, and of the beaver group of them, must be mastered by every one who wishes to understand these animals. And when studied in connexion with their uses, and the habits of the animals, these dry bones live. Bones are the only parts of the beavers any one is likely to discover in the British islands; for the latest records of living beavers seem to prove that they were exterminated in Scotland and Wales in the twelfth century. Once found everywhere in Europe and Asia Minor, from Siberia to the Euphrates, beavers are now found only in Siberia; a few were, indeed, discovered, forty years ago, on one of the affluents of the Elbe; and some

still hide themselves in the banks of the remotest brooks of certain Russian rivers; but the European beavers live solitarily in burrows, rarely making dams or building lodges.

There is no mistaking the chisel teeth of the beaver. He has two incisors and eight molars in each jaw; and empty hollows where the canine teeth might be. The upper pair of cutting teeth extend far into the jaw, with a curve of rather more than a semicircle; and the lower pair of incisors form rather less than a semicircle. Sometimes, one of these teeth gets broken, and then the opposite tooth continues growing until it forms a nearly complete circle. The chewing muscle of the beaver is strengthened by tendons in such a way as to give it great power. But more is needed to enable the beavers to eat wood. The insalivation of the dry food is provided for by the extraordinary size of the salivary glands.

Now, every part of these instruments is of vital importance to the beavers. The loss of an incisor involves the formation of an obstructive circular tooth; deficiency of saliva would render the food indigestible; and when old age comes and the enamel is worn down faster than it is renewed, the beaver is no longer able to cut branches for its support. Old, feeble, and poor, unable to borrow, and ashamed to beg, he steals cuttings, and subjects himself to the penalty assigned to theft. Aged beavers are often found dead with gashes in their bodies, showing that they have been killed by their mates. In the fall of 1864 a very aged beaver was caught in one of the dams of the Esconauba river, and this was the reflection of a great authority on the occasion, one Ah-she-gos, an Ojibwa trapper: "had he escaped the trap he would have been killed before the winter was over, by other beavers, for stealing cuttings."

When the beavers are about two or three years old, their teeth are in their best condition for cutting. On the Upper Missouri they cut the cotton tree and the willow bush; around Hudson's Bay and Lake Superior in addition to the willow they cut the poplar and maple, hemlock, spruce, and pine. The cutting is round and round, and deepest upon the side on which they wish the tree to fall. Indians and trappers have seen beavers cutting trees. The felling of a tree is a family affair. No more than a single pair with two or three young ones are engaged at a time. The adults take the cutting in turns, one gnawing and the other watching; and occasionally a youngster trying his incisors. The beaver whilst gnawing sits on his plantigrade hind legs, which keep him conveniently upright. When the tree begins to crackle the beavers work cautiously, and when it crashes down they plunge into the pond, fearful least the noise should attract an enemy to the spot. After the tree-fall, comes the lopping of the branches. A single tree may be winter provision for a family. Branches five or six inches thick have to be cut into proper lengths for transport, and are then taken and sunk in a pile near the family lodge. As many as nine beavers have been counted at this work; but half the number would be nearer the average engaged. Night after night the beavers are busy in September and October, until the first snows fall on the swamps, and the first frosts film the ponds. Trees are often felled in ponds, that their branches may be preserved within reach under the ice. A cutting of a wild cherry tree eighteen inches in diameter, and with rings cut at three different heights, is to be seen in the state collection at Albany. The different heights of the rings seem to show that the cutting was begun at separate times, when the snow was sinking: for the beavers take immediate advantage of the earliest thaws to replenish with fresh twigs their sour stores. Beaver chips are curiosities. They seem to prove that the upper incisors hold, and the lower gnaw and split, the wood. Judging from the chips, a tree a foot in diameter and three feet in circumference must require three nights' work. Cottonwood trees are soft, but sometimes two feet across, and one of three feet was once found cut through. Sticks are first cut on one side into convenient lengths, and when all the gnawings are done on one side the stick is turned.

M. Sarrasin reported to the Academy of Sciences that beavers not only eat bark and twigs, but also wood. This statement has fallen into discredit; but Dr. W. W. Ely dissected three beavers for Mr. Morgan, and found little else in their stomachs except lignite, unmistakable particles of comminuted wood. When in February and March the sap starts upward the beavers eat the wood for the sake of the saccharine juices. Evergreen trees, the bark of which is never eaten by beavers, are cut down by them; and this is done, it is supposed, for the sake of the sweet gums they exude, and the nutritious mosses growing on them.

Constructed for the land and the water, the beavers live half-land and half-water lives. In all diving animals provision is made against asphyxia; the diving spider takes his bubble of air with him; diving birds and mammals have cavities in which blood may be stopped and kept during the dive. Unvitalised blood is kept in these cavities; and out of the brain and the arteries where its presence would be fatal. Men would not be so easily drowned and hanged as they are, if they had such holes for holding their black venous blood. Trappers say that a beaver can remain under water for ten minutes, and swim in the time a quarter of a mile. Beavers and musk rats, it is said, can travel far under ice, by coming up at intervals to the surface of the water, just under the ice, emitting their carbonic acid gas, and inhaling fresh breaths of respirable air.

Beavers migrate. In May and June, every year, the beavers come down the Missouri; once down, the current prevents their getting up again. The Indians say the old beavers go up and the young ones down rivers; the old being wise enough to take the route to

the best provender. The overstocking of districts is the chief cause of beaver migration. Students of mountain ranges, water-sheds, and river systems, will not find it difficult to understand how migratory beavers ascending rivers, brooks, and rills, and living in banks and swamps, have spread themselves far and wide.

An emigrant who can swim far, dive a long time, and cut wood with self-sharpening chisels, the beaver is still further endowed for his career, by his talents as an engineer. As he can travel best in the water, and as his food floats in water, he uses his engineering skill in constructing ponds, dams, and canals, for the transport of his wood cuttings. His natural home is a burrow, but when he cannot make a burrow he builds lodges and porches. His forepaws or hands are not particularly handy for engineering and building labours; but the brain he has inherited makes up for all deficiencies. The brain of the beaver is smooth; and the size proportionally to the body one to five hundred and thirty-two. The absence of convolutions bespeaks an animal which does not lie in wait for other animals; yet beavers can adapt themselves to circumstances as they arise, in an ingenious way. When the progress of cultivation expels them from their burrows in the banks of rivers, and drives them up unexplored brooks, and into sequestered swamps, they vary their ways of obtaining their food and shelter, according to varying circumstances.

For the purpose of realising this aspect of beaver life, we must accompany Mr. Morgan to the beaver district, which he studied for years, on the level summit of the range of hills skirting the southern shore of Lake Superior, immediately west of Marquette. It is eight miles long from east to west, by six broad from north to south. Many small lakes lie, and many rivulets run, in this district, which the beavers, until recently, possessed as immemorially their own. Leaving out dams less than fifty feet long, there are in this beaver district sixty-three dams, some of them five hundred feet long, and forming ponds covering from a quarter of an acre to twenty or sixty acres of ground. This district is overspread with a thick forest, and is a wilderness to be traversed by none but experienced woodmen on Indian trails. Near the streams grow tamarack and spruce trees: on the rising ground, birch, white and yellow; maple, soft and bird's-eye; poplar, and ash: upon the hills, pines, oak, and sugar maple; whilst among the bushes occur the willow, alder, and cranberry. Now, the question of the engineering beavers is, how they may, from the banks of the streams, reach the succulent twigs and branches of these trees and bushes, by water?

The beavers in Europe and America, living in burrows on river banks, do not construct dams, although they build sometimes what are called false lodges—a sort of porches which mask the entrances to their burrows. Dams are built to make ponds for transport by water of wood cuttings. They make the tamarack and spruce trees accessible by water. When their burrows or lodges are assailed, the beavers take refuge in their ponds. The level of the pond is generally about two feet above the entrance to the lodge or burrow. This level must be maintained, if the beavers are to feel safe; and they control it by their dams. The first impression on observers of these dams, was, that they were the work of communities, like the nests of wasps or hives of bees. But this view is not supported by the results of closer observation. Mr. Morgan is convinced that the larger dams were not built by many beavers working together, but grew from small beginnings, year after year, until the ponds became as large, in the course of centuries, as the localities would permit them to be made. A single family began, and made a dam; as trees were cut down, the necessity for enlarging the pond increased; the accommodation for families was extended; and ponds, covering, perhaps, sixty acres of ground, were formed, large enough to have been called lakes in Europe.

And this is the way in which human towns grow. Rome was not built in a day, or by a colony or community. But we submit that a beaver pond, like a human town, is kept up by the attention, care, oversight, vigilance, and labour, of a community. Just as, along the coast of Sussex, the owners of land and occupiers of houses at certain points, fearful of sharing the fate of the churches, monasteries, and towns, which have been wasted away by the sea, have combined under the compulsion of a common interest to maintain their sea wall, the beavers combine to keep up their dams. This is Mr. Morgan's own showing. Judging from the extent of the meadows, the hummocks formed by decayed vegetation, and the masses of solid materials in the dams, he says they must have existed for hundreds and thousands of years; and must have been kept up by continuous repairs.

There are two kinds of dams; the wood dam, and the earth dam; so called according as poles or mud predominate in the structure. The wood dam is formed of interlaced sticks and poles; and the water finds its way through it. The earth dam, though held together with wood, is composed chiefly of earth, which hides the sticks and becomes a solid dike, sloping on both sides. The surplus water cannot get through this dike; and therefore a single opening is made for it, a sluice: which is the object of the attention and solicitude of the community.

The dam is preferably built on a hard and stony foundation. Stakes are not driven into the ground. Small sticks and brush cemented with mud and kept down by stones, form an embankment. On a stream issuing from Lake Diamond, a stick dam is to be seen two hundred and sixty feet ten inches long, and six feet two inches high. The streamlet it crosses is

only a few feet wide and a few inches deep. At this spot, high hills approach each other within three hundred feet, and therefore the spot was well chosen for a dam stretching across the stream and the gully. By availing themselves of the natural advantages of the locality, and building their dam, the beavers obtained a pond, covering sixty acres of ground, and access to forty acres more of level ground. The side of the dam which opposes the stream is apparently a solid mud bank; the other side is only an inclined slope of interlaced stick work. However loosely the poles and sticks may appear to be put together, if you try to take them asunder you will find them to be tightly interlaced. In the middle of the dam there is a curve, up stream, of a hundred feet in length; but these curves are generally downward, and seem due to the strength of the current where the stream is deepest gradually shifting the foundations of the dam. For the curve is up stream where the current is weak, and down stream where it is strong. During freshets, the dams are submerged, perhaps to the depth of a foot, and damaged; but when the water subsides the damage is soon repaired. During five years Mr. Morgan visited the Grass Lake dam, and always found the pond at the same level, whether the neighbouring streams were high or low, until the sixth year, when the dam showed unusual signs of neglect, as if the beavers were about to abandon a structure which had been kept in repair for centuries.

The dams attain sometimes considerable strength. Three men once pulled a boat across one of them without injuring it. "Upon the sloping face of the Grass Lake dam twenty men could stand together," says Mr. Morgan, "without making any impression upon the structure."

Dams seem to be constructed as auxiliaries: for instance, above the Grass Lake dam there is another dam built to protect it from freshets of the lake, and below it there is a dam which, by keeping up the level, slackens the speed and lessens the pressure of the current of water. This arrangement is often found, and the dams may not over fancifully be called the van, the main, and the rear-guard dams.

A year or two ago, a colony of beavers, seemingly of opinion that a railway embankment on the main branch of the river Carp would help to protect their pond, made a dam across the brook, and raised it about a foot high, notwithstanding the daily passage of trains. If the beavers, however, approved of the embankment as a ready made barrier, the track-master did not approve of the accumulation of the water of their pond against his embankment. Hence arose a conflict of interests between the parties. The railway labourers broke down the dam; the amphibious labourers mended the rents. The perseverance on both sides was admirable. Fifteen times did the navvies pull down; fifteen times did the beavers build up. At length, of course, the paws and tails ceded the victory to the picks and spades.

TIME'S HEALING.

Time worketh wonders in his onward course:
  To those who bear their burdens with meek heart
He lendeth courage, energy, and force.
  Then, "bring forth fruit with patience," O my soul!

Time creepeth with a feeble ling'ring pace,
  He bendeth down his aged back and stoops;
Yet aids the suff'ring in their toilsome race.
  Then, "bring forth fruit with patience," O my soul!

Beneath the shelter of his soft dusk wing
  He leadeth on in welcome shade to peace,
And gently smoothens every rugged thing.
  Then, "bring forth fruit with patience," O my soul!

His scythe, with noiseless surely-sweeping swath,
  Mows down abuses, prejudices, wrongs;
Induces amity, assuages wrath.
  Then, "bring forth fruit with patience," O my soul!

His kind old hand, for all its trembling eld,
  Hath oft the skill to disentangle knots
That we have hopelessly intricate held.
  Then, "bring forth fruit with patience," O my soul!

The silent dropping of his hour-glass sand
  Is like the unheard stealing on of "joy"
That "cometh in the morning" from God's hand.
  Then, "bring forth fruit with patience," O my soul!

ICE.

The thermometer stood at ninety in the shade. There had fallen no rain in England for upwards of six weeks, except an occasional shower, of no more real refreshment to the parched ground than a teaspoonful of water would have been to a thirsty giant. I sat on the lawn of my cottage under the shade of an apple-tree, and read the doleful account in the morning's newspaper of the damage already done by the drought, and the still further damage to be apprehended if the fierce sun continued to stream down upon the world much longer, without veiling his face with a few clouds and storms. Brown was the grass and sickly were the flowers; and the leaves on the tall tree-tops, though green and fresh, made no merry rustling to the gentle wind, for the simple reason that not a breath of air was stirring. I looked wistfully to the deep blue sky, in which there was not a speck of cloud that had a drop of moisture in it, and bethought me how scant was in ordinary seasons the gratitude of the English for one of the greatest blessings of this or of any other country.

Blow, west wind, blow,
And fall, oh, gentle rain;
The corn-fields long to hear thy voice,
And woods and orchards will rejoice
To welcome thee again.

Having too much of a good thing, in the matter of rain, it is only when they suffer from the want of it that the dwellers in these isles, whether agriculturists or not, know what a blessing it is, just as, for a similar reason, most people undervalue their health, until the angelic visitant takes leave of them, perhaps to return no more. After a forty or fifty days' drought, it would be difficult even for Mr. Babbage, Professor De Morgan, or Mr. George Bidder, to count up to within a hundred thousand pounds or so, the value to the farmers and gardeners of Great Britain and Ireland of one good drenching downfal of big round drops continued for four-and-twenty hours. From the blessings of the rain, as I was both warm and thirsty, my thoughts wandered to the blessings of the frost and the snow, and to the fairest production of cold, clear, transparent, delicious Ice, such as Lake Wenham and numberless Norwegian lakes, whose names no one has thought it worth while to promulgate, have for long years been in the habit of supplying to a world not sufficiently grateful for the luxury. As it happened, there was a remnant of pure Wenham in the house, brilliant as the Koh-i-noor, and placing a lump of the dainty blessing in a goblet, and pouring thereon the contents of a bottle of Brighton seltzer, I drank and was refreshed, and felt a physical as well as a moral conviction that ice was one of the greatest bounties of nature, and that those who do not consume it daily as an addendum to their diet, are ignorant of a cheap luxury, or thoughtlessly forego a healthful gratification to the palate. In the moist climate of the British Isles, where the commonest transitions of the weather are from wet to dry, and dry to wet, we scarcely know what wholesome cold is, especially the clear, crisp cold that invigorates the whole system of the healthy human creature, and sets the blood coursing merrily through the veins. Sometimes, it is true, as Shakespeare sings, "The icicles hang by the wall, and Dick the shepherd bites his nail," to prevent his finger-tips from being frostbitten, but such hardy and vigorous seasons are rare and short as angel visits. Not perhaps more than once in seven years has the skater a fair chance for the enjoyment of his beautiful recreation, but when the ice will bear the weight of a crowd, it is one of the pleasantest sights in the world to witness the delight of the young and the middle-aged English of both sexes, as they wend their way to the nearest water, skates in hand, ready for a pleasure as captivating to most people as the dance in a ball-room, and a thousand times more healthful. If there be a happier being in the world at such a time than a nimble skater—male or female—it is the small boy upon a slide, rollicking, uproarious, blissful! Quick motion with little effort is always delightful, and in this respect both skating and sliding afford the nearest approach to bliss and to flying, which such wingless bipeds as men and women can ever hope to enjoy in their present state of existence. "I hate England," said a little Canadian boy of twelve years old, on board a steamer bound from New York to Liverpool, and on his way to school at Harrow. "Why?" said the astonished captain. "Because there's no skating, and the rivers never freeze there, and it's always raining," he replied, sulkily, yet defiantly; "and it's so jolly in Canada in the winter." Jack Frost, if not a jack of all trades, is a jack of many. As an agriculturist, he is as serviceable in producing a full crop as the sunshine or the rain, as every farmer will acknowledge. He destroys the noxious insects, that but for his exterminating touch would consume the early sown seed before it had time to germinate. Moreover, he infuses into the arable earth a chemical virtue that the warm moist atmosphere does not always contribute, and of which the beneficial results are apparent in the summer grass and the autumnal corn. As a scavenger, he does more work in a night, by drying up the miry ways, than a million of men with brooms and shovels could do in a week. As an engineer, he can build a bridge over the Thames or the St. Lawrence, not exactly so durable as Mr. Page's at Westminster, or Mr. Stephenson's at Montreal, but quite as solid as either while it lasts; and has been known to do such Titanic work in a single night, which is a feat that the engineering genius of mere Stephensons, Brunels, or Pages can never hope to accomplish. But it is as a working jeweller that Jack Frost is most conspicuous. By a breath he can transform the dew upon the grass into diamonds, make a rose-leaf as beautiful as a brooch of malachite studded with brilliants, and convert the flimsy rope of the spider's web into a string of beaded pearls, such as empresses might envy, if any human jeweller could execute in more permanent form an adornment so lovely. Nor are these the only specimens of his handiwork. He can trace upon our windows the most delicate filagree work, to which imagination can give almost any form it pleases, from that of the tree, the flower, or the leaf, to that of the whole forest, the flowing river, or a miniature Alp-Land, with the simulacra of Mont Blanc, Monte Rosa, and the Wetterhorn in microscopic accuracy. Nature, so full of beautiful forms, offers nothing more beautiful in its kind than the icicle, produced by the mingled action of the sunshine and the frost; of the sunshine that melts and the frost that hardens; of the frost that gains the temporary victory in the struggle, and converts the thawing snow into pendants of transparent crystal, glowing in the discomfited sunshine with all the colours of the rainbow.

He who has never seen an iceberg—and expects to see one—has, if his expectation be realised, a glory yet to come, and a terror yet to behold.

One of these floating mountains ran aground, as a ship might do, some years ago, and stuck

fast in the harbour of St. John's, Newfoundland. Here it remained for two years, before the heats of the short summers were powerful enough to dissolve it. This berg stood upwards of eight hundred feet in height; and as floating ice sinks two-thirds of its depth, this respectable refrigerator must have been about two thousand four hundred feet in total height, or about six times as high as St. Paul's. Some suppose that the unfortunate Atlantic steamer, the President—the mysterious disappearance of which, a quarter of a century ago, created so much painful anxiety in England and America—must have run against such a floating island as this, and been sent to the bottom with all on board. The iceberg and the floe—the latter being flat or surface, as distinguished from the peak and mountain ice—when detached from the solid earth of the Polar regions, sometimes carry along with them on their sudden disruption large masses of granite; and sometimes Polar bears, which, unsuspicious of danger from the influence of the warm sun that penetrates even these inhospitable regions, have gone to sleep upon the ice, and awakened to find themselves unwilling mariners, drifting away to certain death in the warm waters of the southern seas.

Whatever is beautiful is useful in its degree, and the uses of ice are as manifold as its loveliness. Medical science—always beneficently active to discover the means of alleviation as well as of cure for the numberless physical evils that assail humanity—very early became aware of the value of ice as an anodyne, or soother of pain, in cases of local inflammation. More recently it has discovered that ice can be used as an anæsthetic as advantageously as chloroform, and in some respects more advantageously, inasmuch as it can be employed locally, in surgical operations of a severe character. There is no danger in its application to people of abnormally nervous temperament, or who suffer from heart disease. In the extraction of teeth—a very painful surgical operation, as most people know who remember that man (and woman also)

> Is born to trouble,
> Both from single teeth and double—

ice is an anæsthetic that completely deadens the sensibility of pain, and renders tooth-drawing almost as easy as the paring of the nails. As an article of luxury for the table, ice is only just beginning to be known to the English people—to the "upper ten thousand," as it were. It remains for the present, "caviare to the million," except perhaps in the form of ices, as retailed by the pastrycooks and confectioners. To the fishmongers, as a conservator of their wares in freshness to the latest possible moment, ice has long been known, in the shape of the thin slabs of dirty frozen water, in rare wintry seasons collected from the stagnant pools in the neighbourhood of our great towns and cities. Such ice is good for nothing but refrigeration; but the real Wenham, or Norway, or St. Lawrence ice, is not only good for refrigeration but for consumption, and every purpose of utility and health to which ice can be applied. In the cities of the New World ice is almost as essential an article of diet as bread, and the iceman comes round every morning as regularly as the milkman does in London, and leaves at the doorsteps of every house which he supplies, a glittering block, sufficient for the day's consumption, which the servant or "help" takes in at her convenience, serving up a portion with the breakfast butter, not because it is ordered, but simply as a matter of course. Iced water, iced milk, iced ale or beer, are as common among all classes as iced champagne is among the select few in England. To forego the customary cooler would in the summer, and often in the winter—for ice is good in all seasons—be as great a hardship as to go without dinner.

We are a meat-consuming people; but our labourers and unskilled workmen taste little meat except bacon. Every year butchers' meat is becoming more costly, and further out of the reach of the poor. Trade must bring from South America the superabundant beef, and from the Antipodes the superabundant mutton, that in both of these wealthy and teeming regions find no purchasers. Ice supplies the means for effecting this much-desired result, and there is reason for the hope as well as for the belief that, ere many years have passed, enterprising merchants will be encouraged to convey to our shores fleet loads of the beef and mutton, packed in ice, or chemically frozen, that our population would so gladly purchase at half or a third of the price of British cattle, but that for want of such a trade is boiled down into tallow in Australia, or suffered to rot in Brazil, until it is fit for nothing but manure. If, as has been said, the man who makes a blade of grass to grow where grass never grew before, is a public benefactor, who shall measure the benefaction of him who shall first successfully organise a plan for bringing the beef and mutton of the world to the mouths of the English multitude?

There is one other aspect of ice which we in these islands may be excused, if we look upon with pride: the love of adventure which the mysteries of the Northern Pole have maintained in the minds of our hardy and daring mariners. "The storm, the fog, the sleet, the pitiless cold," have no terrors for them, as dozens of expeditions to discover the North-west Passage, and as the names of Ross, Parry, Franklin, M'Clintock abundantly testify.

THE SELF-DECORATIVE ARTS.

There is no baseness to which some men will not descend, in order to become "noble." Humanity has no more crawling specimen than the creature who has centred his ambition on an ornament for his button-hole. A cross and an end of riband is the object of a lifetime of ante-chamber waiting, of toadying to influential friends, of abject meanness. Governing men, and governing classes, seeing the avidity with which poor humanity will swallow the

glittering bait of a medal or a star, have gone to work. The manufacture of these cheap rewards has thriven. The fierce opponent is tamed by a decoration, and led from revolutionary barricades to the avenues of palaces by a riband-end. His wife was at his elbow. He must be decorated. All their acquaintance of any note were knights of at least one order. How proud would she be to walk with him, with his honours blushing on his noble breast! The star would become a splendid heirloom in the family. It was impossible to refuse it. Families far less honourably descended than his, could show decorations of many orders worn by their ancestors. Would he go to his grave leaving his children no memento of his distinguished career? Would he be borne to the cemetery like the Auvergnat round the corner, when he might command a military escort, and have the drum muffled in his honour? Besides, he should observe how a decorated gentleman took precedence of a plain gentleman on all occasions. The man with a riband in his button-hole carried his letter of introduction and his passport upon his bosom. How did a man of a certain age look in evening dress, without the least bit of a cross upon him? His unbroken black told the company that he was an individual who had passed the meridian of life without having done the least thing to mark him from the mass of his fellow-creatures. Until he became decorated, he was one of the million.

Napoleon the First comprehended all the uses of an order of chivalry when he established the Legion of Honour. He took the old European orders for the basis of his new institution, and infused the spirit of the revolution into an ancient art. He established a democratic order of chivalry which should comprehend desert of every description, and put the Marshal of France beside the great artist, the renowned composer, the first inventor. He knew what he was about, when he took the bauble from his own breast to place it upon that of the great professor of science. The legionaries of France are now spread over the broad face of the empire, and their crosses and those of their fathers are hung up in village homes. The red riband keeps the bonnet rouge in order.

The desire for decoration at the button-hole has become so fervid and so general on the continent of Europe, that it has been found necessary to proceed on system. We all know that there are speculators who offer to buy the ambitious man the cross of some petty state for little more than the cost of the material; but these are vulgarians in the art of human decoration, whose dupes are of the lowest ignorant description. The arts of self-decoration have progressed apace of late years—not among the vulgar, but in the midst of men of the liberal professions, and among the rich, who want to make a figure in drawing-rooms. Since no gentleman's evening dress is now complete without a star or a riband, it follows that there must be a strong desire burning among men of education who are addicted to the salons of the Continent, to crave the favours of Anhalt, or implore the smiles of Bavaria. The order of Kamehama is only three years old, while the military order of Alcantara was established by the Abbé de Fitaro in 1177. If Monsieur de Chope cannot hope to have his heart warmed with the Garter or the Fleece, he must be content to sue to their High Mightinesses of the Sandwich Islands.

In order to put the polite world in possession of the information necessary to him who would have the modern self-decorative arts at his command, a guide has at length been published.* It is the merest skeleton of a handbook, but then it is the first of its class. The author or compiler has broken new ground. The skeleton will be presently covered with flesh, and clothed; and we shall have a complete new science. For the present we must be satisfied with a mere elementary work—a book of rudiments in the art of cringing and fawning.

The Self-Decorator's Handy-Book opens with a chapter on Cross-Hunting. The writer justifies his book by a preliminary survey of a Paris ball-room—at an Embassy, or the Hôtel de Ville. The crowds of men dazzle the humble intruder's sight with their crosses of brilliants. The prismatic light dances in every corner—for the love of diamond stars is as general as the love of woman—and more lasting. The writer is acquainted with a young diplomatist who has prepared an order box, in which there is a row of compartments left vacant for the stars that in the ordinary course of a diplomatic career must fall into them. He remembers a musician who went almost mad with pride and joy, when he found the red rosette flaming on his coat. He became so vain that he was unapproachable. "I shall never forget one morning," writes our professor of the self-decorative arts, "when I was talking with him on the boulevard des Italiens. An elegantly dressed lady brushed him with her crinoline. Enraged at this disrespect to his decoration, he turned savagely upon her, and lifted his hand as though he were about to knock her head off her shoulders with his umbrella." The professor naïvely adds that all people do not feel the reception of honours with this intensity: a fact that is fortunate for elegant ladies walking in Paris streets. Some—but these are rare birds, indeed—are indifferent about the Legion. The professor owned a human dodo of this kind, for cousin. He was the oldest mayor in France. Informed that the prefect of his department was about to recommend him to the Ministry of the Interior for the red riband, the veteran replied: "And what should I do with it, friend, in my eighty-second year?" Béranger and the Legion is more to the purpose. Louis Philippe offered the cross to the old minstrel. Béranger replied: "Tell the king that I thank him for his kind wish; but that I can accept nothing from him, being a republican." The

* L'Art de se faire Décorer. Paris. Alean Lévy.

messenger expostulated. "The king predicted your objection, and charged me, therefore, to assure you that his opinions were even more republican than yours." "Then," the poet persisted, turning on his heel, "the king is too republican for me."

Inasmuch as most people do not carry their "puritanism" to this excess, the professor of the self-decorative arts has buckled to the noble task of making the back staircase a pathway of roses. He addresses authors and composers, to begin with. The starting point of advice is that they should obtain permission from crowned heads, before dedicating their works to them. "This formality is indispensable." Crowned heads, it would seem, being alive to the saying that dedication is a terrible weapon which the pamphleteer or the court fiddler has in his hands. Here follows an invaluable warning. "The sovereign pontiff deigns to accept occasionally the respectful homage of pious works, but his holiness never accepts a dedication." The fortunate receive a letter of acknowledgment from the Pope's secretary; the superlatively happy—as M. Artaud-Hausmann—are invested with the title and insignia of a Knight of the Holy Sepulchre: a dignity which authorises the happy author or artist to enfold himself in a costume of the middle ages, and to bear a black coat enlivened with scarlet arms.

The professor passes at once to the Legion of Honour, which is described as one of the most highly prized. "It is the star which captivates the sight, electrifies the soul, and the rays of which brighten, like a beacon light, the genius which the dark clouds of misery seek to roll into the abyss of life." The professor can be eloquent. The uses of the star of the Legion are more than common foes have dreamt of, in their philosophy. "The breast on which its favouring light shines, is swollen with a noble pride. The happy man who has deserved it is transformed when he receives it. He metamorphoses himself; and henceforth, exempt from even trivial faults, he becomes the model of his companions in the narrow path of honour and of duty." In brief, the Cross of the Legion is a liberal education, and a perpetual sermon. The uses of the Legion and of other decorations having been established, and it having been shown that cross-hunting has become a popular sport, the raison d'être of the professor's handy-book is established. The next point is, where to choose? Which shall be the happy hunting grounds? There are one hundred and twenty-three military and civil orders in the world. France has one only—like Belgium, Monaco, and Oldenburg; but then there are seven in England, ten in Spain, nine in Prussia, eight in Russia, eleven in Bavaria, and four even in Hesse. Why, Nassau has two, and so has Tunis. Here is an embarras de richesse for the true hunter after honours. He can please himself. He who is content with little birds can display the fowler's arts in Bavaria, or have a poetic tournée in the Grand Duchy of Hesse. The wildest poetic twitter must surely bring down Monaco. The handy-book is deficient in one particular, that it does not inform the order-hunter how the big-wigs of the Sandwich Islands are to be captivated.

From the list of game we pass on—and in this the order of the work is admirable—to the imperial and royal owners of the preserves. From these Greatnesses, we proceed in a straight line to their gamekeepers, or ambassadors and ministers in Paris. The hunter must now choose for himself, and invent tactics proper to his individual predicament. A few examples are all the professor can afford, by way of lessons. These are all in verse. It would seem that stars and ribands are mostly to be had for a song. The keen hunter keeps his eye on the movements of courts; when a foreign prince approaches within song-shot, he twangs his harp, and pipes his loudest. The professor appears to have had a busy time of it, last year, when, crowns were as common as nightcaps, on the banks of the Seine. The Viceroy of Egypt was addressed in lofty numbers, and Frenchmen were invited to dazzle his eyes with splendid fêtes. William of Prussia was told that France "thrilled with pride" at his approach, and that of his royal cousins and brothers. He is one of the most valiant warriors of which this century has seen the birth, at page 28: at page 14, his majesty was born on the 22nd of March, 1797. Poetic licence has no bounds when the song of triumph is sounding, and a star, with a riband attached, appears in the heavens. The hunter must be equal to any occasion. He must be inspired in a telegraph office, when the event demands the effort. Our professor of the self-decorative arts affords his readers the perusal of a poem which he addressed last year to the Sultan, by electric telegraph, telling his Majesty that France would never forget the honour he was on his way to pay her. The history of his Majesty's exploits had charmed her, and her pride was preparing "an immense success" for him.

Fuad Pasha, "the intelligent minister whom Europe appreciated," was laid under contribution. "Oh! celebrated Pasha!" the professor exclaimed, in his enthusiasm, keeping his eye steadily fixed on his object. M. de Bismarck was important, and he was addressed by the professor in verse about which there could be no mistake. It would be impossible to ask a butcher for a cutlet in more downright language. The professor's lady is the petitioner to the gallantry of the count. The lady does not beat about the bush for her bird; but tells the Prussian king's minister she is astonished at his forgetfulness of her husband's claims. Since she is aware that justice is his invariable rule of condu t, she raises her most bewitching smile and adds, "dear count, repay his homage to the king with an end of riband holding the brilliants of a cross." He has been singing twenty-five years in the courts of kings. The lady's "Russian heart" is fretted at the delay in the acknowledgment of his lyre: and she im-

plores M. de Bismarck not to permit his friends to say that her husband has travaillé pour le roi de Prusse. This final hit is surely a mistake in the art.

Fire often, and you are sure to bring down something, appears to be the professor's motto.

These are among the means by which a man's breast may be made to sparkle with diamonds. The art, as the professor teaches it, will tempt many, when they see the red riband in a man's button-hole, to glance at the knees of the wearer's trousers. Lately, a pike was caught in the Seine—so the chroniclers say—with a chevalier's cross of the Legion of Honour hooked to its gills. Three years ago, a lunatic drowned himself, wearing all his decorations—showing two comforting points, namely, that weak intellect is no impediment to progress in the arts of self-decoration, and that a madman never loses the sense of the value of his crosses. It was hard for the fish, however, a French writer remarks, to be taken so soon; the lunatic might have been promoted!

THE COMING ECLIPSE.

There are a few occasions when, without their deeds being evil, men may like darkness better than light. We are just now envying other nations a little bit of obscurity which is soon about to fall to their share. We, too, shall be in the dark during a part of the time, but it will not be the exact sort of gloom we want. And, as the shadow cannot come to us, some of us must go to the shadow.

France, has sent an expedition costing two thousand pounds, to the Malacca Peninsula (irreverently put to sea on a Friday), to observe the total eclipse of the sun promised to the Asiatics for August the eighteenth, but, unfortunately, invisible in Europe. The whole duration of the spectacle, where visible, will occur in the interval of time between two and eight in the morning as indicated by our clocks and watches. Most of the European governments have organised scientific missions to Hindostan or the coast of Siam. That part of Asia will therefore be the seat of a sort of competitive astronomical congress, whose main object will be to discover any secrets the Sun and the Moon may let out between them.

On this occasion, as on many others, sailors and astronomers will render each other assistance. The former have to thank astronomy for the means of determining their path across the seas, and pursuing their way with certainty and safety. The allegories of bygone days would represent Urania as aiding in the conquest of Neptune. On the other hand, sailors have ever been ready to give astronomers the benefit of their professional skill. Witness the last two transits of Venus,* when French and English navigators transported observers to various points of the globe—to California, the north of Finland, and the Isles of the Pacific. Captain Cook commanded the expedition to Otaheite, and himself took part in the observations there.

Moreover, the French Minister of Public Instruction and the Académie des Sciences have confided a similar though more special errand to an astronomer of great experience—M. Janssen—whose attention will be particularly directed to the spectral examination of the eclipse, and the analysis of the solar atmosphere. He proceeds, not to the Straits of Malacca, but to Masulipatam, in Hindostan, on the coast of the Bay of Bengal, where the English expedition will also take up its quarters.

There is a further reason for this dispersion of scientific forces. If, by ill-luck, the weather should be bad at one station, it is to be hoped that it will not be so at the other; and that, somehow or somewhere, observations will be effected. In any case, science must be the gainer by the journey.

M. Henry de Parville, to whom we are indebted for these and other details, states that after the eclipse the French expedition will go to Saïgon, in Annam, to determine the geographical co-ordinates of that colony, and will make certain astronomical investigations which can be successfully pursued in those regions only.

The reason why astronomers take the trouble to cross the seas for the sake of watching the eclipse of the 18th of August, instead of quietly waiting at home for the next solar eclipse that may happen to be visible, is, that this one promises unusual help towards the settlement of certain questions which have been pending ever since 1842.

It may surprise many, but it is true nevertheless, that astronomers, in 1868, will have to do their utmost to describe with tolerable exactness the phenomena presented by a total eclipse of the sun. In consequence of the short duration of a total eclipse, and the excitement caused by so imposing a spectacle, those eclipses have hitherto been watched imperfectly. The year 1842 presented a convenient opportunity. It was visible in Italy and in the south of France. To go and see it, was only a pleasant jaunt. It was carefully observed, and, to their great astonishment, astronomers beheld what they did not in the least expect. Many of our readers may remember their wonderment. At the moment of totality, the black disc of the moon was seen surrounded by luminous appendages, of which nobody had ever heard a word.

In a total eclipse, the Moon, passing between the eye and the Sun, intercepts the light of that luminary, acting in the same way as an opaque screen. What could be that bright encircling glory, confused in outline, strange in form? No astronomer could answer the question. Astonishment at the sight prevented their taking exact note or measurement. The complete obscuration was soon at an end, and the occasion was consequently lost. They could only resolve to be better on their

* See A Long Look-out, vol. xix. of All the Year Round, p. 174.

guard another time, and not to be caught in the same way again.

The position of space which immediately surrounds the Sun is very imperfectly known to men of science. The intensity of the light is an insurmountable obstacle to close examination. Eclipses, by extinguishing the light, allow a temporary peep to be taken at these unknown regions. Laplace's theory of the constitution of the universe, combined with the researches of modern astronomers, render it probable that that dazzling belt conceals many phenonema of which we are ignorant; such as swarms of small planets, zones of cosmic matter, as well as an enormous atmosphere enveloping the Sun. Consequently it has been asked whether the immense flame-like tongues of light suddenly seen surrounding the Moon's disc during the darkest moments of an eclipse, be not really clouds, appendages, or protuberances, belonging to the solar atmosphere. At present, nothing is known with certainty.

In 1860, we had another total eclipse of the Sun, visible in Spain. That time, people were not taken by surprise; the red protuberances flaring round the lunar disc were duly examined; but the uncertainty as to their real nature was not removed. They certainly are not mountain peaks, as some observers thought. If several of the protuberances were pointed and upright, a still larger number were rounded, extending in length rather than in height. Many seemed quite detached from the Sun, resembling the cumulus clouds of our atmosphere. Others, after rising perpendicularly, were deflected laterally, like flames drawn on one side by a current of air.

Some dozen years ago, Herschell's and Arago's hypothesis respecting the constitution of the Sun, was accepted by the world without demur. The Sun (probably inhabited, according to them) was enclosed within three distinct enveloping atmospheres. The first, reckoning from the Sun's surface, was thick and dense, serving as a non-conducting screen, and also as a highly efficient reflector. The second, above it, was luminous and hot—a photosphere of phosphorescent clouds. The third, overlying the other two, consisted of a sort of external gaseous atmosphere. These atmospheres had independent movements and currents, by which the spots on the Sun were explained. The thickness of the two lower atmospheres immediately enveloping the solid nucleus of the Sun—itself quite moderate in temperature—was estimated at a thousand leagues, or two thousand five hundred English miles.

Besides its complexity, this theory involves several insurmountable difficulties. What could be the source of heat in the light-and-warmth-giving atmosphere? We can conceive no substance, liquid, or gas, capable of producing such effects during a long lapse of ages. William Herschell supposed it to be neither a liquid nor an elastic fluid, but a stratum of phosphoric clouds floating in the Sun's transparent atmosphere. Again: What medium, interposed between it and the Sun, could isolate and protect the latter, sufficiently to make its surface habitable? The progress of science has broken up this curious nest of antagonistic boxes, one acting as a heater the other as a cooler. The triple scaffolding has given way. Nobody now asks for cartes de visite of the Sun's inhabitants, or feels uneasy about their weight in consequence of the immense force of gravity there. If an ox, there, be twenty-eight times as heavy as with us, and the butchers' profits in proportion; if a man, falling a distance equal to his own height, would be as completely smashed as if he jumped from the Monument; if the Sun's inhabitants, as we have been gravely assured, must be small slight creatures, of a peculiarly elastic and supple organisation, something like Sylphs in the Rape of the Lock; it is all one to us, now o'days. The Sun's inhabitants have vanished in smoke.

The present belief is that the Sun is simply a body which is luminous in consequence of high temperature pervading its whole substance. Matter in fusion, obeying dynamical laws, boils and heaves with ascending and descending currents, which cause the appearances known as spots in the Sun. The "protuberances," it is conjectured, are incandescent vapours rising to the very confines of the solar atmosphere.

As the heat and light given out by the Sun cannot be maintained by ordinary combustion —the Sun's whole mass would have been burnt up long ago, were it made of any earthly combustible—the most recent hypothesis is, that its heat is caused by the arrested motion of meteorites, planets, or other cosmic matter falling into it. This is known as "The Meteoric Theory of the Sun," and was propounded by Mayer in 1848, and worked out fully. Dr. Tyndall accepts it as very probable, if not completely demonstrated, adding, "It would be a great mistake to regard it as chimerical. It is a noble speculation; and depend upon it, the true theory, if this, or some form of it, be not the true one, will not appear less wild or less astounding."

We are better armed for observation in 1868 than in 1860. Spectral analysis* has furnished us with a potent instrument capable of rendering marvellous service. We now compel light —the only link, besides gravity, which connects us, with other worlds floating in open space— to betray its secrets and tell us what it is made of. Every luminous ray which reaches us, can be forced to state its origin: whether sent forth by a solid, or a gas: whether it comes to us directly or by reflection. Thus, the light proceeding from the protuberances, submitted to spectral analysis, will inform us whether those protuberances are solid; whether they are clouds of solid particles or of incandescent vapours; whether they shine with their own proper light, or are merely bright mir-

* See PHOTOLOGICAL FACTS, vol. xiii. p. 151.

rors which send to us rays from the fiery solar nucleus. Modern conjectures will thus be verified and tested, and physical astronomy will have made a sure step in advance.

The eclipse of the 18th of August offers excellent conditions for the examination of the protuberances, the search after bodies near the Sun, and the determination of the Sun's diameter. For some time to come, we shall not have another equally favourable occasion. Although total eclipses are not absolutely rare, and when they do occur are visible over a large extent of the Earth's surface, there are very few whose duration is long enough to admit of attentive observation. In 1870, there will be a total eclipse visible at Oran in Algeria, and at Cadiz in Spain; but it will be so short, that an observer will only have time to assure himself of its actual occurrence. A December sky, too, is seldom propitious to astronomers. This year's eclipse will be comparatively long. In the Gulf of Siam, the darkness will last six minutes and forty-six seconds; in Cambogia, where Saïgon is situated, it will last six minutes and forty seconds; giving plenty of time for precise and careful observation.

The long duration of the eclipse is owing to several causes. The Moon, on the 18th of August, will be within six hours of her perigee, whilst the Sun will not be far from his apogee; in other words, the Moon being as near to us as it is possible for her to be, and the Sun very distant, the amount of occultation will thereby be increased. Moreover, the Moon's apparent diameter will be further augmented in the regions where the eclipse will take place near the zenith, namely, in Cambogia and the Gulf of Siam.

It is not, however, to either of those points that the French expedition betakes itself. After due consideration, the Malacca Peninsula was fixed on, for the following intelligible reason. The path of the central eclipse is this: Passing Aden (South Arabia), it crosses the Arabian Sea to Hindostan, which it reaches at Kolapoor, a little above Goa. It then crosses Hindostan from west to east, leaving it near Masulipatam. Then it stretches across the Bay of Bengal, passing to the north of the Andaman Isles, over the northern portion of the Malayan Peninsula, the Gulf of Siam, Cambogia Point, the north of Borneo and Celebes, afterwards skirting the south of New Guinea. The selection of a station somewhere along this line was seriously considered by a committee of astronomers and naval officers, presided over by the minister of Public Instruction.

At Aden, the point nearest home, the Sun will be too near the horizon, and the duration of the eclipse only three minutes. The west coast of Hindostan would hardly suit the purpose. August is the rainy season, the time of the monsoon. There would be a strong chance of scientific observers travelling several thousand leagues for the pleasure of looking at a canopy of clouds. The English astronomers, foreseeing that probability, have fixed on the east coast, at Masulipatam, where a vast tract of highland and mountain will protect them—at least they hope so—from the south-west monsoon. The English government has there got together powerful means of observation.

It is thither, we have seen, that the French send M. Janssen; for at Saïgon also the south-west monsoon is unfavourable. Cambogia is a flat and marshy country with no protection from the winds. Borneo, Celebes, and Amboyna, were also rejected. The French have consequently selected a position on the east coast of Malacca, where their observers will be sheltered from the monsoon by the chain of mountains which runs along the whole length of the Peninsula. We have to wait in patience for the results obtained at these international look-outs. We shall probably have a more approximate answer to the much-vexed question, What is the Sun?

POPULAR TALES FROM ITALY.

The following tales were communicated, in the first instance, to Dr. H. Grimm, of Berlin, by a young Neapolitan, who served as a model to the painters at Rome. Dr. H. Grimm sent the newly-acquired treasure to his uncle, the great Jacob Grimm, whose death, in September, 1863, shortly after he had received them, prevented their publication. The appearance, in the Jahrbuch für Romanische und Englische Literatur of the Venetian tales, edited by Dr. Reinheld Köhler, and afterwards partially described in All The Year Round, having attracted the notice of Dr. H. Grimm, he sent another copy of his Neapolitan tales to Dr. Köhler, who makes them known through the same medium. These tales we give here, told in our own fashion, conceiving that, while, by their resemblance in principle to many popular stories of various countries, they may interest ethnologists, they will be found sufficiently novel in some of their details to entertain the reader who merely seeks amusement.

Three brothers, the two eldest of whom hated the youngest with an intensity consistent with that state of natural feeling which we find represented in so many fairy tales, mustered sufficient friendship to go out for a day's shooting. Of course, they lost their way in a wood, and of course the office of climbing a tree, and endeavouring to ascertain their whereabout devolved upon the youngest. A palace, splendidly illuminated, presented itself to his gaze, and thither they directed their steps. The knocks which they inflicted with their guns upon the door brought no response, so they made an entrance by main force, and found a large empty hall in which there was a well-spread table with three plates, three goblets, and as many chairs. They naturally availed themselves of an opportunity so inviting, and when they had feasted sufficiently, took their rest in an adjoining chamber, which was furnished with three beds. The two eldest, like dolts as they were, went

fast asleep; the youngest, with the prudence proper to number three, kept wide awake.

When they had all risen in the morning the eldest agreed to remain in the palace, and cook the dinner, while the other two went out with their guns. While alone, occupied with his useful duties, he received a visit from a man of gigantic stature, who seemed by no means gratified to find him making himself so completely at home, and told him he would give him as many blows with a cudgel as there are days in the year. This was no empty menace. The giant thrashed the intruder with arithmetical precision, and then conveniently retired. Being of a reserved disposition, the eldest brother on the return of the rest did not find it expedient to describe what had happened, but attributed the paleness, naturally produced by the three hundred and sixty-five blows, to an illness with which he had been attacked in the course of the day.

The second brother, who kept house on the day following, found himself in the same position as the eldest: with this variation of detail, that he received blows equal in number to the days in two years. He, likewise, when his brother returned, ascribed his paleness to an indisposition; but, rightly suspecting that the eldest had been initiated into the private manners and customs of the castle, he favoured him with a wink, which the youngest, ever 'cute, did not fail to observe.

As the sharp third had, however, listened attentively when his brothers, supposing him to be asleep, had confessed their sufferings to each other, he was well primed with information when his turn arrived for keeping house, and he received the regular visit from the giant. That huge specimen of humanity, increasing his vindictiveness by the law of arithmetical progression, proposed to chastise the third delinquent with a number of blows equal to that of the days in three years; but the youth boldly answered him that he himself must prepare to receive as many blows as there are days in six years. The giant changed the subject by remarking that he was taller than the defiant youngster; but the latter refuted the assertion by standing on a chair. Whether the giant failed to detect the rude artifice, or whether he scorned to imitate so paltry a device, we cannot say. Certain it is that by merely stretching his neck, he overtopped the small braggart, who, to maintain his ascendency, was forced to mount from the chair to the table. Still the elongation of neck continued; and though, by setting the chair on the table, the youth secured for himself a pedestal more elevated, the giant did not desist, but vigorously went on augmenting the distance between his head and his shoulders.

Now, the position which is rendered familiar to modern eyes by the figure of the clown in the itinerant Fantoccini, however convenient it might be for a short person walking in a crowd, or standing in a theatre at the back of a crowded pit, is anything but suitable to the purpose of self-defence. So, when the giant's neck was at its longest, the youngster on his table-supported chair found no difficulty in striking off the giant's head with his cutlass. When he had afterwards hewed the body into pieces and flung them into a well, his victory was complete.

To his brothers, when they came back, he expressed a wish to descend into the well at once; and, fastening himself to a cord, to which a bell was also attached, requested them to let him down, warning them that if, after three days, the bell gave no sound, they might fairly consider him dead. Here was a case in which he might count on their compliance, and they cheerfully granted his request: though they knew no more than we ourselves what he could possibly want at the bottom of a strange well.

We may suppose that he was guided by a correct instinct, for when he had reached the bottom of the well, he found himself in a large meadow, richly adorned with flowers and somewhat disfigured by the presence of an ugly old woman, who sat by a fire boiling a caldron. To the young man's question as to the purpose of her occupation, she replied that her son had been cut to pieces, and that she intended to restore him to life by boiling him in the caldron. Perceiving at once that the dismembered son could be no other than the giant, the youth prevented the old lady from carrying out her kindly purpose by suddenly pushing her into the caldron and boiling her to death.

This virtuous act performed, a short walk across the meadow brought our adventurer to a palace, at the gates of which he knocked, but was informed by a lovely damsel, who appeared at the window, that if he entered he would be devoured by two serpents; she added that her husband, a magician, was at home and in bed, and that he likewise could eat human flesh. Of these little difficulties the youth made short work. He struck off, first the heads of the serpents, then the head of the magician, and finally roasted a portion of each for his dinner. The magician's widow, who had been carried off against her will, was so highly delighted with him, that she wished to accompany him; but he declined the offer, and she therefore gave him a ring for a keepsake. A second palace, in which the youth found another lady, who gave him a handkerchief, another magician in bed, and two lions, and where he killed and partially ate the lions and the magician, we may pass over and follow him to a third palace, where the victims were a third magician and two tigers, and where there was a lady more beautiful than the second, who was herself more beautiful than the first: though, as they were all sisters, there was a strong family likeness between them.

Accompanied by the third and most exquisite beauty, who presented him with a costly jewel, the youth retraced his steps, picking up the other two sisters on his backward route, until he was once more at the bottom of the well. Here he rung the bell, and attached to the rope

the least lovely sister, who, however, was quite handsome enough to cause a fray between the two brothers, when they had drawn her up. The similar ascent of the second and then of the third sister varied the object of the fray, but it still continued. As for the third brother, who remained at the bottom, he felt so doubtful as to the probable manner of his reception, that when the rope was about to rise for the fourth time, he fastened to it a heavy stone, in lieu of his own sweet person. The result proved that his caution had not been superfluous, for when the stone had risen about half way, the brothers let go the rope, and it fell with a heavy sound, impressing them with the pleasant but false belief that they had committed fratricide.

Not knowing what to do next, the solitary youth began to rub the jewel given to him by the third lady, and it immediately asked him what he required? His first wish, which was simply to leave the well, was modest enough; but the second, which he expressed after the first had been granted, showed a somewhat covetous disposition, inasmuch as it was to be the most handsome, learned, valiant, and clever person who had ever lived in the world. Raised to this standard of excellence, the youth, travelling anew, came to the kingdom governed by the royal father of the three young ladies, but could find no lodging in the principal city, so great was the throng that had been gathered together by reason of the approaching marriage of his brothers with two of the king's daughters. Fortunately, a hospitable cobbler allowed him to rest in his shop, warning him at the same time that he could give him no breakfast; whereupon the youth, by a rub on the jewel, summoned a great dog, whom he instructed to enter the palace, and upset the breakfast table. His instructions were punctually followed, the king being so much incensed that—what?—he ordered the guard not to allow the dog to pass on any future occasion.

On the following day, however, the royal breakfast-table was upset by another dog, stronger than the first. This was traced by the guard to the residence of the cobbler, who would have been immediately dragged off to prison had not the youth stepped forward and declared that he himself was the owner of the intrusive animals.

"To the gallows with him!" naturally exclaimed the king, when the owner of the dogs was brought to the palace; but when his first outbreak was over, he was considerate enough to grant the prisoner's modest request for permission to speak a few words.

"Whose ring is this?" cried the youth, availing himself of his opportunity.

"Mine!" shrieked the shortest of the princesses.

"And who claims this ring?"

"I do!" shrieked the one of middling stature.

"And who gave me this jewel?"

"I did," replied the third and tallest princess, "because you freed me from the conjurer."

Thus truth came to light, and we have only to record that the youngest brother married the handsomest princess, and that his two seniors were hanged.

The second tale is also about three brothers, and, like the first, redounds to the credit of the youngest. They were the sons of an unfortunate man, who was so poor that they had not enough to eat. The eldest, therefore, laudably left home, to get his living, and he had not gone far before he met a gentleman who was willing to engage him as a servant on rather singular conditions. He was to have one hundred scudi a month, with his board, but a special clause was added to the effect that the first of the contracting parties who repented of his bargain should give the other the right to flay him alive. To these terms, which, if hard, at any rate seemed equitable, the lad agreed; and on the following day he was sent into the wood, with four mules, to fetch some fagots, with a small piece of bread for his refreshment. When he came back, he asked for his breakfast, whereupon his master, though evidently under the impression that he had consumed enough food already, gave him another bit of bread smaller than the first. Like Oliver Twist, the lad dared to ask for more.

"Then you repent of our bargain, do you?" asked the master.

"Most decidedly," replied the youth. The words were scarcely out of his mouth when his master caught him, flayed him, and flung his body behind the door.

The second brother, who followed the first, met the same gentleman, and, by force of a similar contract, came to a similar end. With the third brother, who likewise set out in due course, the preliminaries were the same as with the other two; but the result was different, for, although when he returned from the forest with his mules his demand for breakfast was answered by the presentation of a piece of bread so thin that the sun shone through it, and although a complaint was on the tip of his tongue, he luckily observed his skinless brothers behind the door, and held his peace. The disappointed master actually pressed him for words of discontent.

"You are not dissatisfied with our bargain?" said he.

"Certainly not."

"You are quite sure?"

"Quite—quite—nothing could be more satisfactory."

On the following day, the lad was again sent into the wood, but he preferred taking the mules into a neighbouring garden, where he cut down trees and vines, and committed all sorts of devastation, and then took the spoil home to his master. He was soon followed by the owner of the garden, who insisted that the employer was liable for the misdeeds of the employed, and compensation was accordingly made. It was now the lad's turn to fish for

an expression of discontent; but his master was ready for the occasion, and declared himself perfectly satisfied.

The satisfaction so warmly expressed was far from genuine, and the gentleman's wife, perceiving the expediency of getting rid of a youth too clever to be tricked out of his skin, suggested that on the following day he should be sent with a drove of pigs to a neighbouring forest, inhabited by an eminent ogre, who would certainly devour him. The order was duly given, and the lad having first provided himself with a horn and some soft cheese, entered the forest, where he saw the ogre, who roughly asked him who he was.

"That will tell you who I am," said he, and putting the cheese on a stone, he struck it so smartly with his fist that it was scattered in all directions, the eminent but stupid ogre all the while believing that the broken article was a piece of marble, and marvelling at the strength of his new acquaintance.

A treaty of amity was the result, and the ogre, in the kindest mood, took the lad home to his wife, who was by no means credulous as to the great strength of their guest, and, in the night, counselled her husband to put him to a new trial. On the following morning, therefore, the ogre challenged his guest to play with him at "ruzzica:" a game which consists in flinging to the greatest possible distance a round, heavy piece of wood, by means of a twisted cord: and took with him an enormous pole as his missile. This, when they had reached a convenient spot, he flung to an immense distance, and jeeringly asked his comrade to do the like. But the lad simply took out his horn, and began to blow.

"What is that for?" asked the ogre.

"Why," said the youth, "you can perceive the sea there, can't you?"

"Of course I can."

"Well, there are folks living beyond the sea, and I wish to warn them of my throw, that they may not be hurt."

"Ugh," said the giant, "my pole has fallen into the sea already, so I may as well give up."

If the ogre's wife was incredulous when she heard of the pounded marble, she was absolutely disgusted when she was informed of the trial of strength in which her husband had been conquered by words only.

"Try him again to-morrow," said she, "and mind that you look sharp this time."

On the morrow, therefore, the ogre took the lad into the forest, for the purpose of getting logs, and thought to surprise him by breaking one tree after another, as if they had been so many dry twigs.

"Match that!" quoth the ogre.

But, by way of reply, the lad simply put the end of a rope into the ogre's hand, and bidding him hold it fast, began to run with all his might.

"Where are you going?" asked the ogre.

"Look here," replied the youth. "I'm going to put this rope like a girdle round the forest, and then to break all the trees down with one strong pull. It's such finnikin, niggling work to pull down the trees singly."

"Oh, I dare say. I'm not going to have my forest spoiled in that fashion," said the huge lubber. "I give in."

More disgusted than ever with this new proof of her husband's utter stupidity, the wife now proposed the form of trial that should take place on the following day.

"Don't be put off for a third time with empty words," said she, "but bid him chop down trees with his hands in your presence."

The youth, who lay awake in his bed and overheard this counsel, sneaked out in the middle of the night with an augur in his hand, and bored some five or six holes in the thickest tree. This done, he sneaked back to his bed.

On the following day, he and his host set out on their usual walk, and when they had reached the forest, the ogre again proposed that they should cut logs.

"Very well," said the youth, "the hardest wood is nothing to me;" and running straight at the prepared tree, he contrived to thrust his fingers into the holes.

The ogre imitated the experiment on a tree that had not been similarly prepared, and grievous damage to his fingers was the result.

The wife hearing what had passed, and seeing her husband's damaged fingers, now began to think that their guest really was a very extraordinary person; indeed, far too extraordinary to live. So she advised her lord to take an iron bar, and give him, when asleep, a blow sufficiently strong to hinder him from waking in the morning. But the wary lad contrived to put a heap of straw into the bed as a substitute, and this received the three heavy blows administered in the dark by the ogre. His reappearance in the morning surprised the worthy pair not a little, and they were deeply impressed by his reply, when, in answer to the kind inquiries as to how he had passed the night, he said that he had been grievously bitten by three fleas.

The ogre desired no more trials of strength, but, taking a business-like view of his position, offered to give the guest as much gold as he wanted if he would only leave the forest. The bargain was struck, the gold was taken, and the youth, sounding his horn, brought together his drove of pigs, and directed his steps towards the residence of his master. An unlimited consumption of acorns in the forest had made the animals so extremely sleek and plump, that they attracted the attention of two salesmen who met him on the road, and they expressed a wish to purchase them. He said that he would readily part with the whole drove, if they would leave him the ears and the tails, and as they were contented with this reservation, he received almost as much gold as he could carry.

When he had nearly reached his master's

house, he set his collection of tails and ears in the sandy soil, as if they had been so many plants.

"Where are the pigs?" was the first question put to him by his master on his reappearance.

"Well, to tell you the truth, they have grown so fat that they are all sunk into the ground."

To convince himself of this strange fact by ocular proof, the master hastened to the place where the ears and tails had been set, and pulling out one, was disappointed to find that it lacked continuation. He asked what had become of his pigs.

"The things of this world pass away," said the youth, raising his eyes with a sigh, "and the pigs are reduced to dust."

"You shall pay for this, you scoundrel!" cried the master, grinding his teeth.

"You surely don't repent of our contract?" said the lad.

"Yes I do; and I wish from the bottom of my soul I had never clapped eyes on you——"

He stopped short, suddenly perceiving the mistake he had made; but it was too late, for the youth caught him by the throat and flayed him alive, so that he perished miserably.

Having thus become master of the house by right of conquest, he buried his brothers, sent for his father, took unto himself a wife, and lived happily for the rest of his days.

The man who having been married five years and finding himself still childless, is much afflicted on that account, does not open the third tale with much promise of novelty, though the fact that he was about to drown himself shows that his grief was above the average level. Of course his complaints attracted a mysterious stranger, ready to hear the particulars of his case and to strike a bargain. After a little conversation, this stranger promised that the mourner's wife should at once present him with a son, if he, the mourner, would undertake to consign the aforesaid son to the stranger when he had attained the age of a year and three days.

Not from treachery, but from shortness of memory, the man, who on his return home had found there a new-born child, neglected to take him to his benefactor on the appointed day, although the urchin was so big, that when he had completed the twelvemonth he looked five years old. So when he came with the bulky article to the beach, he found his friend waiting and looking rather cross.

"You might have been punctual," he growled. "This is the hundred and fourth day, and the child was due on the hundred and third."

The man might have objected that a chronologist who counted a hundred days to the year had no right to insist on perfect accuracy with respect to time, had the stranger remained a minute longer. This, however, was not the case. In the twinkling of an eye, stranger and child both vanished.

The benevolent being who had been so prompt to give and to take away, was a potent magician; he resided in a palace in the middle of a wood, where he duly educated his hopeful charge.

Now it happened one day, when the boy had completed his fifteenth year, that the conjuror had a mind to go a hunting, but before he set off he put into the boy's hands a bunch of keys, giving him full permission to look over the whole palace, with the exception of three rooms, to the doors of which three specially indicated keys belonged. The trespass of Bluebeard's wife and of the over-curious man in the Arabian Nights is, of course, committed. The youth, when he finds himself alone, and has seen as much of the palace as is open to his inspection, longs to enter the three prohibited rooms, and does not long in vain

In the first room he found a fountain, with water of an emerald hue, which after he had stared at it a short time, seemed to say "Hush!" He then observed a marble statue, which, as he was of such a curious turn, he might, one would think, have noticed sooner, and which said, in a melancholy tone:

"Miserable wretch! who are you, and what brings you here?"

The lad explained that he had been brought thither by his own curiosity, in opposition to the injunctions of his father; whereupon the statue proceeded, in the same dismal tone:

"That man is not your father; he only stole you. I ought to know all about it, as my two brothers and myself are in precisely the same case. Here is a purse for you, which will give you as much money as you want. Put it up, and take care that nobody sees it."

In the second room there was a fountain of silver water, and another marble statue, which gave him a magic wand. A fountain of golden water, and a marble statue who gave him three small packets of wonderful seeds, were the conspicuous objects in the third chamber, which he was about to leave, when suddenly a drop of water, splashed from the basin of the fountain, fell upon his little finger, and covered it with a coating of gold which no amount of rubbing could remove. Lest this ornament should reveal his trespass, he covered it with a piece of rag; and on the magician's return stated that he had cut his finger. But the magician, too sharp to be deceived by such a paltry expedient, pulled away the rag, and half smiling through his anger, said:

"You deserve death, but I will not be too hard upon you. Indeed, as you seem so fond of the golden fountain, you shall pay it another visit."

So, taking him into the third room, he dipped his head into the water, thus turning his hair into gold. Then, covering his head with a

close-fitting cap, and telling him that he would certainly die if he removed it, he turned him out of his palace into the wide, wide world. The lad now bethought himself of the gifts which he had received from the marble statue, and first taking out the rod, required a straight road to the nearest house. The trees of the forest at once opened, so as to leave a broad highway; passing along this, he came to the garden of a king's palace, where a gardener, who was hard at work, asked him why he did not work too. He explained that there was something wrong in his head, which kept people from employing him; but the gardener thought he was good enough to work for his board and lodging, if he required no wages; and engaged him accordingly.

The cap, which he was compelled to wear, was not becoming, but, nevertheless, the king's daughter was favourably impressed with his appearance, and, on learning that he was the gardener's new assistant, said that he should bring her a nosegay on the following day. The magical seeds now had their use, for, sowing them, he was able to supply the princess for three days with beautiful flowers, the fragrance of which filled the palace. Indeed, the bouquet on the third day was so surpassingly gorgeous that the princess declared she would marry none but the gardener's assistant.

The youth now felt that he could rather die than wear the cap any longer; and, drawing the necessary supplies from his purse, he bought a watch and a mirror, and taking them into the garden, laid himself under a tree. Then, deliberately taking off the cap, he looked steadily into the mirror, and counted the minutes on the watch. Finding, at the end of three minutes, that his face did not become paler, or give any other sign of approaching death, he perceived that the magician's warning had merely been intended to frighten him, and ran to the princess, with his cap still off, as delighted to accept her offered hand as the king was to find a son-in-law with a gold-mine on his head.

The marriage of the princess to a stranger was, however, displeasing to the sons of neighbouring sovereigns, who had wooed her in vain; uniting their forces against the common foe, they invaded the kingdom on all sides, but were soon repelled by an army five million strong, which the youth raised with the magic rod. Peace restored, the king abdicated in favour of his son-in-law, the lad with the golden hair.

The first story is the one to which the greatest number of parallels drawn from familiar sources may be found. The particular trick played on the giant is however not common; neither is the endowment of the hero with cannibal propensities. It will be observed that he not only kills, but partially eats the three magicians. This peculiarity seems to point to people wilder than the Italians.

The manner in which the ogre is tricked by the youngster in the second story is common enough, a parallel being readily found in Grimm's stories. But the compact between the lad and the master is remarkable. How is it that personages whose very atmosphere is trickery, find themselves so completely bound by a verbal agreement, that neither of them dreams of escaping from its conditions, but both submit without a struggle to the penalty they have incurred? It seems to us that there is some gap in the story; that something has been lost which would explain the impossibility of a breach of the extraordinary contract.

Of all the three stories, the last is the most pleasing. It contains in a singular manner the element of "curiosity punished" with that of the acquisition of magical gifts: though the gifts are less distinct than in many other tales, the virtue of the rod being so great that the power of the rest becomes superfluous, and is only used for a purpose for which preternatural aid is scarcely required. We ought also to know something more about those singular statues, who are able to confer what is little short of omnipotence, yet cannot release themselves from durance vile.

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THE MOONSTONE.

By the Author of "The Woman in White," &c. &c.

Second Period. The Discovery of the Truth. (1848—1849.)

Sixth Narrative.

Contributed by Sergeant Cuff.

I.

Dorking, Surrey, July 30th, 1849. To Franklin Blake, Esq. Sir.—I beg to apologise for the delay that has occurred in the production of the Report with which I engaged to furnish you. I have waited to make it a complete Report; and I have been met, here and there, by obstacles which it was only possible to remove by some little expenditure of patience and time.

The object which I proposed to myself has now, I hope, been attained. You will find, in these pages, answers to the greater part—if not all—of the questions, concerning the late Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite, which occurred to your mind when I last had the honour of seeing you.

I propose to tell you—in the first place—what is known of the manner in which your cousin met his death; appending to the statement such inferences and conclusions as we are justified (according to my opinion) in drawing from the facts.

I shall then endeavour—in the second place—to put you in possession of such discoveries as I have made, respecting the proceedings of Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite, before, during, and after the time, when you and he met as guests at the late Lady Verinder's country house.

II.

As to your cousin's death, then, first.

It appears to me to be established, beyond any reasonable doubt, that he was killed (while he was asleep, or immediately on his waking) by being smothered with a pillow from his bed—that the persons guilty of murdering him are the three Indians—and that the object contemplated (and achieved) by the crime, was to obtain possession of the diamond, called The Moonstone.

The facts from which this conclusion is drawn, are derived partly from an examination of the room at the tavern; and partly from the evidence obtained at the Coroner's Inquest.

On forcing the door of the room, the deceased gentleman was discovered, dead, with the pillow of the bed over his face. The medical man who examined him, being informed of this circumstance, considered the post-mortem appearances as being perfectly compatible with murder by smothering—that is to say, with murder committed by some person, or persons, pressing the pillow over the nose and mouth of the deceased, until death resulted from congestion of the lungs.

Next, as to the motive for the crime.

A small box, with a sealed paper torn off from it (the paper containing an inscription) was found open, and empty, on a table in the room. Mr. Luker has himself personally identified the box, the seal, and the inscription. He has declared that the box did actually contain the diamond, called the Moonstone; and he has admitted having given the box (thus sealed up) to Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite (then concealed under a disguise), on the afternoon of the twenty-sixth of June last. The fair inference from all this is, that the stealing of the Moonstone was the motive of the crime.

Next, as to the manner in which the crime was committed.

On examination of the room (which is only seven feet high), a trap-door in the ceiling, leading out on to the roof of the house, was discovered open. The short ladder, used for obtaining access to the trap-door (and kept under the bed), was found placed at the opening, so as to enable any person, or persons, in the room, to leave it again easily. In the trap-door itself was found a square aperture cut in the wood, apparently with some exceedingly sharp instrument, just behind the bolt which fastened the door on the inner side. In this way, any person from the outside could have drawn back the bolt, and opened the door, and have dropped (or have been noiselessly lowered by an accomplice) into the room—its height, as already observed, being only seven feet. That some person, or persons, must have got admission in this way, appears evident from the fact of the aperture being there. As to the manner in which he (or they) obtained access to the roof of the tavern, it is to be remarked that the third house, lower down in the street, was empty, and under repair—that a long ladder was left by the workmen, leading from the pavement to the top of the house—and that,

on returning to their work, on the morning of the 27th, the men found the plank which they had tied to the ladder, to prevent any one from using it in their absence, removed, and lying on the ground. As to the possibility of ascending by this ladder, passing over the roofs of the houses, passing back, and descending again, unobserved—it is discovered, on the evidence of the night policeman, that he only passes through Shore Lane twice in an hour, when out on his beat. The testimony of the inhabitants also declares, that Shore Lane, after midnight, is one of the quietest and loneliest streets in London. Here again, therefore, it seems fair to infer that—with ordinary caution, and presence of mind—any man, or men, might have ascended by the ladder, and might have descended again, unobserved. Once on the roof of the tavern, it has been proved, by experiment, that a man might cut through the trapdoor, while lying down on it, and that in such a position, the parapet in front of the house would conceal him from the view of any one passing in the street.

Lastly, as to the person, or persons, by whom the crime was committed.

It is known (1) that the Indians had an interest in possessing themselves of the Diamond. (2) It is at least probable that the man looking like an Indian, whom Octavius Guy saw at the window of the cab, speaking to the man dressed like a mechanic, was one of the three Hindoo conspirators. (3) It is certain that this same man dressed like a mechanic, was seen keeping Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite in view, all through the evening of the 26th, and was found in the bedroom (before Mr. Ablewhite was shown into it) under circumstances which lead to the suspicion that he was examining the room. (4) A morsel of torn gold thread was picked up in the bedroom, which persons expert in such matters, declare to be of Indian manufacture, and to be a species of gold thread not known in England. (5) On the morning of the 27th, three men, answering to the description of the three Indians, were observed in Lower Thames Street, were traced to the Tower Wharf, and were seen to leave London by the steamer bound for Rotterdam.

There is here, moral, if not legal, evidence, that the murder was committed by the Indians.

Whether the man personating a mechanic was, or was not, an accomplice in the crime, it is impossible to say. That he could have committed the murder, alone, seems beyond the limits of probability. Acting by himself, he could hardly have smothered Mr. Ablewhite—who was the taller and the stronger man of the two—without a struggle taking place, or a cry being heard. A servant girl, sleeping in the next room, heard nothing. The landlord, sleeping in the room below, heard nothing. The whole evidence points to the inference that more than one man was concerned in this crime—and the circumstances, I repeat, morally justify the conclusion that the Indians committed it.

I have only to add, that the verdict at the Coroner's Inquest was Wilful Murder against some person, or persons, unknown. Mr. Ablewhite's family have offered a reward, and no effort has been left untried to discover the guilty persons. The man dressed like a mechanic has eluded all inquiries. The Indians have been traced. As to the prospect of ultimately capturing these last, I shall have a word to say to you on that head, when I reach the end of the present Report.

In the mean while, having now written all that is needful on the subject of Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite's death, I may pass next to the narrative of his proceedings before, during, and after the time, when you and he met at the late Lady Verinder's house.

III.

With regard to the subject now in hand, I may state, at the outset, that Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite's life had two sides to it.

The side turned up to the public view, presented the spectacle of a gentleman, possessed of considerable reputation as a speaker at charitable meetings, and endowed with administrative abilities, which he placed at the disposal of various Benevolent Societies, mostly of the female sort. The side kept hidden from the general notice, exhibited this same gentleman in the totally different character of a man of pleasure, with a villa in the suburbs which was not taken in his own name, and with a lady in the villa, who was not taken in his own name, either.

My investigations in the villa have shown me several fine pictures and statues; furniture tastefully selected, and admirably made; and a conservatory of the rarest flowers, the match of which it would not be easy to find in all London. My investigation of the lady has resulted in the discovery of jewels which are worthy to take rank with the flowers, and of carriages and horses which have (deservedly) produced a sensation in the Park, among persons well qualified to judge of the build of the one, and the breed of the others.

All this is, so far, common enough. The villa and the lady are such familiar objects in London life, that I ought to apologise for introducing them to notice. But what is not common and not familiar (in my experience), is that all these fine things were not only ordered, but paid for. The pictures, the statues, the flowers, the jewels, the carriages and the horses—inquiry proved, to my indescribable astonishment, that not a sixpence of debt was owing on any of them. As to the villa, it had been bought, out and out, and settled on the lady.

I might have tried to find the right reading of this riddle, and tried in vain—but for Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite's death, which caused an inquiry to be made into the state of his affairs.

The inquiry elicited these facts:—

That Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite was entrusted with the care of a sum of twenty thousand pounds—as one of two Trustees for a young gentle-

man, who was still a minor in the year eighteen hundred and forty-eight. That the Trust was to lapse, and that the young gentleman was to receive the twenty thousand pounds, on the day when he came of age, in the month of February, eighteen hundred and fifty. That, pending the arrival of this period, an income of six hundred pounds was to be paid to him by his two Trustees, half yearly—at Christmas, and at Midsummer Day. That this income was regularly paid by the active Trustee, Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite. That the twenty thousand pounds (from which the income was supposed to be derived) had, every farthing of it, been sold out of the Funds, at different periods, ending with the end of the year eighteen hundred and forty-seven. That the power of attorney, authorising the bankers to sell out the stock, and the various written orders telling them what amounts to sell out, were formally signed by both the Trustees. That the signature of the second Trustee (a retired army officer, living in the country) was a signature forged, in every case, by the active Trustee—otherwise, Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite.

In these facts, lies the explanation of Mr. Godfrey's honourable conduct, in paying the debts incurred for the lady and the villa—and (as you will presently see) of more besides.

We may now advance to the date of Miss Verinder's birthday (in the year eighteen hundred and forty-eight)—the twenty-first of June.

On the day before, Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite arrived at his father's house, and asked (as I know from Mr. Ablewhite, senior, himself) for a loan of three hundred pounds. Mark the sum; and remember at the same time, that the half yearly payment to the young gentleman was due on the twenty-fourth of the month. Also, that the whole of the young gentleman's fortune had been spent by his Trustee, by the end of the year 'forty-seven.

Mr. Ablewhite, senior, refused to lend his son a farthing.

The next day Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite rode over, with you, to Lady Verinder's house. A few hours afterwards, Mr. Godfrey (as you yourself have told me) made a proposal of marriage to Miss Verinder. Here, he saw his way no doubt—if accepted—to the end of all his money-anxieties, present and future. But, as events actually turned out, what happened? Miss Verinder refused him.

On the night of the birthday, therefore, Mr, Godfrey Ablewhite's pecuniary position was this. He had three hundred pounds to find on the twenty-fourth of the month, and twenty thousand pounds to find in February eighteen hundred and fifty. Failing to raise these sums, at these times, he was a ruined man.

Under those circumstances, what takes place next?

You exasperate Mr. Candy, the doctor, on the sore subject of his profession; and he plays you a practical joke, in return, with a dose of laudanum. He trusts the administration of the dose (prepared in a little phial) to Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite—who has himself confessed the share he had in the matter, under circumstances which shall presently be related to you. Mr. Godfrey is all the readier to enter into the conspiracy, having himself suffered from your sharp tongue, in the course of the evening. He joins Betteredge in persuading you to drink a little brandy and water before you go to bed. He privately drops the dose of laudanum into your cold grog. And you drink the mixture.

Let us now shift the scene, if you please, to Mr. Luker's house at Lambeth. And allow me to remark, by way of preface, that Mr. Bruff and I, together, have found a means of forcing the money-lender to make a clean breast of it. We have carefully sifted the statement he has addressed to us; and here it is at your service.

IV.

Late on the evening of Friday, the twenty-third of June ('forty-eight), Mr. Luker was surprised by a visit from Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite. He was more than surprised, when Mr. Godfrey produced the Moonstone. No such diamond (according to Mr. Luker's experience) was in the possession of any private person in Europe.

Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite had two modest proposals to make, in relation to this magnificent gem. First, Would Mr. Luker be so good as to buy it? Secondly, Would Mr. Luker (in default of seeing his way to the purchase) undertake to sell it on commission, and to pay a sum down, on the anticipated result?

Mr. Luker tested the Diamond, weighed the Diamond, and estimated the value of the Diamond, before he answered a word. *His* estimate (allowing for the flaw in the stone) was thirty thousand pounds.

Having reached that result, Mr. Luker opened his lips, and put a question: "How did you come by this?" Only six words! But what volumes of meaning in them!

Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite began a story. Mr. Luker opened his lips again, and only said three words, this time. "That won't do!"

Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite began another story. Mr. Luker wasted no more words on him. He got up, and rang the bell for the servant, to show the gentleman out.

Upon this compulsion, Mr. Godfrey made an effort, and came out with a new and amended version of the affair, to the following effect.

After privately slipping the laudanum into your brandy and water, he wished you good-night, and went into his own room. It was the next room to your's; and the two had a door of communication between them. On entering his own room Mr. Godfrey (as he supposed) closed this door. His money-troubles kept him awake. He sat, in his dressing-gown and slippers, for nearly an hour, thinking over his position. Just as he was preparing to get into bed, he heard you, talking to yourself, in your own room, and going to the door of communication, found that he had not shut it as he supposed.

He looked into your room to see what was the matter. He discovered you with the candle in your hand, just leaving your bedchamber. He heard you say to yourself, in a voice quite unlike your own voice, "How do I know? The Indians may be hidden in the house."

Up to that time, he had simply supposed himself (in giving you the laudanum) to be helping to make you the victim of a harmless practical joke. It now occurred to him, that the laudanum had taken some effect on you, which had not been foreseen by the doctor, any more than by himself. In the fear of an accident happening, he followed you softly to see what you would do.

He followed you to Miss Verinder's sitting-room, and saw you go in. You left the door open. He looked through the crevice thus produced, between the door and the post, before he ventured into the room himself.

In that position, he not only detected you in taking the Diamond out of the drawer—he also detected Miss Verinder, silently watching you from her bedroom, through her open door. He saw that *she* saw you take the Diamond, too.

Before you left the sitting-room again, you hesitated a little. Mr. Godfrey took advantage of this hesitation to get back again to his bedroom before you came out, and discovered him. He had barely got back, before you got back too. You saw him (as he supposes) just as he was passing through the door of communication. At any rate, you called to him in a strange, drowsy voice.

He came back to you. You looked at him in a dull sleepy way. You put the Diamond into his hand. You said to him, "Take it back, Godfrey, to your father's bank. It's safe there—it's not safe here." You turned away unsteadily, and put on your dressing-gown. You sat down in the large arm-chair in your room. You said, "*I* can't take it back to the bank. My head's like lead—and I can't feel my feet under me." Your head sank on the back of the chair—you heaved a heavy sigh—and you fell asleep.

Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite went back, with the Diamond, into his own room. His statement is, that he came to no conclusion, at that time—except that he would wait, and see what happened in the morning.

When the morning came, your language and conduct showed that you were absolutely ignorant of what you had said and done overnight. At the same time, Miss Verinder's language and conduct showed that she was resolved to say nothing (in mercy to you) on her side. If Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite chose to keep the Diamond, he might do so with perfect impunity. The Moonstone stood between him, and ruin. He put the Moonstone into his pocket.

V.

This was the story told by your cousin (under pressure of necessity) to Mr. Luker.

Mr. Luker believed the story to be, as to all main essentials, true—on this ground, that Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite was too great a fool to have invented it. Mr. Bruff and I agree with Mr. Luker, in considering this test of the truth of the story to be a perfectly reliable one.

The next question, was the question of what Mr. Luker would do, in the matter of the Moonstone. He proposed the following terms, as the only terms on which he would consent to mix himself up with, what was (even in *his* line of business) a doubtful and dangerous transaction.

Mr. Luker would consent to lend Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite the sum of two thousand pounds, on condition that the Moonstone was to be deposited with him as a pledge. If, at the expiration of one year from that date, Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite paid three thousand pounds to Mr. Luker, he was to receive back the Diamond, as a pledge redeemed. If he failed to produce the money at the expiration of the year, the pledge (otherwise the Moonstone) was to be considered as forfeited to Mr. Luker—who would, in this latter case, generously make Mr. Godfrey a present of certain promissory notes of his (relating to former dealings) which were then in the money-lender's possession.

It is needless to say, that Mr. Godfrey indignantly refused to listen to these monstrous terms. Mr. Luker, thereupon, handed him back the Diamond, and wished him good night.

Your cousin went to the door, and came back again. How was he to be sure that the conversation of that evening would be kept strictly a secret between his friend and himself?

Mr. Luker didn't profess to know how. If Mr. Godfrey had accepted his terms, Mr. Godfrey would have made him an accomplice, and might have counted on his silence as on a certainty. As things were, Mr. Luker must be guided by his own interests. If awkward inquiries were made, how could he be expected to compromise himself, for the sake of a man who had declined to deal with him?

Receiving this reply, Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite did, what all animals (human and otherwise) do, when they find themselves caught in a trap. He looked about him in a state of helpless despair. The day of the month, recorded on a neat little card in a box on the money-lender's chimney-piece, happened to attract his eye. It was the twenty-third of June. On the twenty-fourth, he had three hundred pounds to pay to the young gentleman for whom he was trustee, and no chance of raising the money, except the chance that Mr. Luker had offered to him. But for this miserable obstacle, he might have taken the Diamond to Amsterdam, and have made a marketable commodity of it, by having it cut up into separate stones. As matters stood, he had no choice but to accept Mr. Luker's terms. After all, he had a year at his disposal, in which to raise the three thousand pounds—and a year is a long time.

Mr. Luker drew out the necessary documents on the spot. When they were signed, he gave Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite two cheques. One,

dated June 23rd, for three hundred pounds. Another, dated a week on, for the remaining balance—seventeen hundred pounds.

How the Moonstone was trusted to the keeping of Mr. Luker's bankers, and how the Indians treated Mr. Luker and Mr. Godfrey (after that had been done) you know already.

The next event in your cousin's life, refers again to Miss Verinder. He proposed marriage to her for the second time—and (after having been accepted) he consented, at her request, to consider the marriage as broken off. One of his reasons for making this concession has been penetrated by Mr. Bruff. Miss Verinder had only a life-interest in her mother's property—and there was no raising the missing twenty thousand pounds on *that*.

But you will say, he might have saved the three thousand pounds, to redeem the pledged Diamond, if he had married. He might have done so certainly—supposing neither his wife, nor her guardians and trustees, objected to his anticipating more than half of the income at his disposal, for some unknown purpose, in the first year of his marriage. But even if he got over this obstacle, there was another waiting for him in the background. The lady at the Villa, had heard of his contemplated marriage. A superb woman, Mr. Blake, of the sort that are not to be trifled with—the sort with the light complexion and the Roman nose. She felt the utmost contempt for Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite. It would be silent contempt, if he made a handsome provision for her. Otherwise, it would be contempt with a tongue to it. Miss Verinder's life-interest allowed him no more hope of raising the "provision" than of raising the twenty thousand pounds. He couldn't marry—he really couldn't marry, under all the circumstances.

How he tried his luck again with another lady, and how *that* marriage also broke down on the question of money, you know already. You also know of the legacy of five thousand pounds, left to him shortly afterwards, by one of those many admirers among the soft sex whose good graces this fascinating man had contrived to win. That legacy (as the event has proved) led him to his death.

I have ascertained that when he went abroad, on getting his five thousand pounds, he went to Amsterdam. There, he made all the necessary arrangements for having the Diamond cut into separate stones. He came back (in disguise), and redeemed the Moonstone on the appointed day. A few days were allowed to elapse (as a precaution agreed to by both parties), before the jewel was actually taken out of the bank. If he had got safe with it to Amsterdam, there would have been just time between July 'forty-nine, and February 'fifty (when the young gentleman came of age) to cut the Diamond, and to make a marketable commodity (polished or unpolished) of the separate stones. Judge from this, what motives he had to run the risk which he actually ran. It was "neck or nothing" with him—if ever it was "neck or nothing" with a man yet.

I have only to remind you, before closing this Report, that there is a chance of laying hands on the Indians, and of recovering the Moonstone yet. They are now (there is every reason to believe) on their passage to Bombay, in an East Indiaman. The ship (barring accidents) will touch at no other port on her way out; and the authorities at Bombay (already communicated with by letter, overland) will be prepared to board the vessel, the moment she enters the harbour.

I have the honour to remain, dear sir, your obedient servant, Richard Cuff (late sergeant in the Detective Force, Scotland Yard, London).*

Seventh Narrative.

In a Letter from Mr. Candy.

Frizinghall, Wednesday, September 26th, 1849.—Dear Mr. Franklin Blake, you will anticipate the sad news I have to tell you, on finding your letter to Ezra Jennings returned to you, unopened, in this enclosure. He died in my arms, at sunrise, on Wednesday last

I am not to blame for having failed to warn you that his end was at hand. He expressly forbade me to write to you. "I am indebted to Mr. Franklin Blake," he said, "for having seen some happy days. Don't distress him, Mr. Candy—don't distress him."

His sufferings, up to the last six hours of his life, were terrible to see. In the intervals of remission, when his mind was clear, I entreated him to tell me of any relatives of his to whom I might write. He asked to be forgiven for refusing anything to *me*. And then he said—not bitterly—that he would die as he had lived, forgotten and unknown. He maintained that resolution to the last. There is no hope now of making any discoveries concerning him. His story is a blank.

The day before he died, he told me where to find all his papers. I brought them to him on his bed. There was a little bundle of old letters which he put aside. There was his unfinished book. There was his Diary—in many locked volumes. He opened the volume for this year, and tore out, one by one, the pages relating to the time when you and he were together. "Give those," he said, "to Mr. Franklin Blake. In years to come, he may feel an interest in looking back at what is written there." Then he clasped his hands, and prayed God fervently to bless you, and those dear to you. He said he should like to see you again. But the next moment, he altered his mind. "No," he answered, when I offered to write. "I won't distress him! I won't distress him!"

At his request, I next collected the other papers—that is to say, the bundle of letters, the unfinished book, and the volumes of the

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* Note.—Wherever the Report touches on the events of the birthday, or of the three days that followed it, compare with Betteredge's Narrative—Chapters VIII. to XIII.

Diary—and enclosed them all in one wrapper, sealed with my own seal. "Promise," he said, "that you will put this into my coffin with your own hand; and that you will see that no other hand touches it afterwards."

I gave him my promise. And the promise has been performed.

He asked me to do one other thing for him—which it cost me a hard struggle to comply with. He said, "Let my grave be forgotten. Give me your word of honour that you will allow no monument of any sort—not even the commonest tombstone—to mark the place of my burial. Let me sleep, nameless. Let me rest, unknown." When I tried to plead with him to alter his resolution, he became for the first, and only time, violently agitated. I could not bear to see it; and I gave way. Nothing but a little grass mound, marks the place of his rest. In time, the tombstones will rise round it. And the people who come after us will look, and wonder, at the nameless grave.

As I have told you, for six hours before his death his sufferings ceased. He dozed a little. I think he dreamed. Once or twice, he smiled. A woman's name, as I suppose—the name of "Ella"—was often on his lips at this time. A few minutes before the end came, he asked me to lift him on his pillow, to see the sun rise through the window. He was very weak. His head fell on my shoulder. He whispered "It's coming!" Then he said, "Kiss me!" I kissed his forehead. On a sudden, he lifted his head. The sunlight touched his face. A beautiful expression, an angelic expression, came over it. He cried out three times; "Peace! peace! peace!" His head sank back again on my shoulder, and the long trouble of his life was at an end.

So he has gone from us. This was, as I think, a great man—though the world never knew him. He bore a hard life bravely. He had the sweetest temper I have ever met with. The loss of him makes me feel very lonely. Perhaps I have never been quite myself again since my illness. Sometimes, I think of giving up my practice, and going away, and trying what some of the foreign baths and waters will do for me.

It is reported here, that you and Miss Verinder are to be married next month. Please to accept my best congratulations.

The pages of my poor friend's Journal are waiting for you at my house—sealed up, with your name on the wrapper. I was afraid to trust them to the post.

My best respects and good wishes attend Miss Verinder. I remain, dear Mr. Franklin Blake, truly yours, Thomas Candy.

Eighth Narrative.

Contributed by Gabriel Betteredge.

I am the person (as you remember, no doubt) who led the way in these pages, and opened the story. I am also the person who is left behind, as it were, to close the story up.

Let nobody suppose that I have any last words to say here, concerning the Indian Diamond. I hold that unlucky jewel in abhorrence—and I refer you to other authority than mine, for such news of the Moonstone as you may, at the present time, be expecting to receive. My purpose, in this place, is to state a fact in the history of the family, which has been passed over by everybody, and which I won't allow to be disrespectfully smothered up in that way. The fact to which I allude is—the marriage of Miss Rachel and Mr. Franklin Blake. This interesting event took place at our house in Yorkshire, on Tuesday, October ninth, eighteen hundred and forty-nine. I had a new suit of clothes on the occasion. And the married couple went to spend the honeymoon in Scotland.

Family festivals having been rare enough at our house, since my poor mistress's death, I own—on this occasion of the wedding—to having (towards the latter part of the day) taken a drop too much on the strength of it.

If you have ever done the same sort of thing yourself, you will understand and feel for me. If you have not, you will very likely say, "Disgusting old man! why does he tell us this?" The reason why is now to come.

Having, then, taken my drop (bless you! you have got your favourite vice, too; only your vice isn't mine, and mine isn't your's), I next applied the one infallible remedy—that remedy being, as you know, Robinson Crusoe. Where I opened that unrivalled book, I can't say. Where the lines of print at last left off running into each other, I know, however, perfectly well. It was at page three hundred and eighteen—a domestic bit concerning Robinson Crusoe's marriage, as follows:

"With those Thoughts, I considered my new Engagement, that I had a Wife"—(Observe! so had Mr. Franklin!)—"one Child born"—(Observe again! that might yet be Mr. Franklin's case, too!)—"and my Wife then"—What Robinson Crusoe's wife did, or did not do, "then," I felt no desire to discover. I scored the bit about the Child with my pencil, and put a morsel of paper for a mark to keep the place: "Lie you there," I said, "till the marriage of Mr. Franklin and Miss Rachel is some months older—and then we'll see!"

The months passed (more than I had bargained for), and no occasion presented itself for disturbing that mark in the book. It was not till this present month of November, eighteen hundred and fifty, that Mr. Franklin came into my room, in high good spirits, and said, "Betteredge! I have got some news for you! Something is going to happen in the house, before we are many months older."

"Does it concern the family, sir?" I asked.

"It decidedly concerns the family," says Mr. Franklin.

"Has your good lady anything to do with it, if you please, sir?"

"She has a great deal to do with it," says Mr. Franklin, beginning to look a little surprised.

"You needn't say a word more, sir," I answered. "God bless you both! I'm heartily glad to hear it."

Mr. Franklin stared like a person thunderstruck. "May I venture to inquire where you got your information?" he asked. "I only got mine (imparted in the strictest secresy) five minutes since."

Here was an opportunity of producing Robinson Crusoe! Here was a chance of reading that domestic bit about the child which I had marked on the day of Mr. Franklin's marriage! I read those miraculous words with an emphasis which did them justice—and then I looked him severely in the face. "*Now*, sir, do you believe in Robinson Crusoe?" I asked, with a solemnity suitable to the occasion.

"Betteredge!" says Mr. Franklin, with equal solemnity, "I'm convinced at last." He shook hands with me—and I felt that I had converted him.

With the relation of this extraordinary circumstance, my re-appearance in these pages comes to an end. Let nobody laugh at the unique anecdote here related. You are welcome to be as merry as you please over everything else I have written. But when I write of Robinson Crusoe, by the Lord it's serious—and I request you to take it accordingly!

When this is said, all is said. Ladies and gentlemen, I make my bow, and shut up the story.

EPILOGUE.

The Finding of the Diamond.

I.

THE STATEMENT OF SERGEANT CUFF'S MAN, (1849).

On the twenty-seventh of June last, I received instructions from Sergeant Cuff to follow three men; suspected of murder, and described as Indians. They had been seen on the Tower Wharf, that morning, embarking on board the steamer bound for Rotterdam.

I left London, by a steamer belonging to another company, which sailed on the morning of Thursday, the twenty-eighth.

Arriving at Rotterdam, I succeeded in finding the commander of the Wednesday's steamer. He informed me that the Indians had certainly been passengers on board his vessel—but as far as Gravesend only. Off that place, one of the three had inquired at what time they would reach Calais. On being informed that the steamer was bound to Rotterdam, the spokesman of the party expressed the greatest surprise and distress at the mistake which he and his two friends had made. They were all willing (he said) to sacrifice their passage money, if the commander of the steamer would only put them ashore. Commiserating their position, as foreigners in a strange land, and knowing no reason for detaining them, the commander signalled for a shore boat, and the three men left the vessel.

This proceeding of the Indians having been plainly resolved on beforehand, as a means of preventing their being traced, I lost no time in returning to England. I left the steamer at Gravesend, and discovered that the Indians had gone from that place to London. Thence, I again traced them, as having left for Plymouth. Inquiries made at Plymouth, proved that they had sailed, forty-eight hours previously, in the Bewley Castle East Indiaman, bound direct for Bombay.

On receiving this intelligence, Sergeant Cuff caused the authorities at Bombay to be communicated with, overland—so that the vessel might be boarded by the police immediately on her entering the port. This step having been taken, my connection with the matter came to an end. I have heard nothing more of it since that time.

II.

THE STATEMENT OF THE CAPTAIN, (1849).

I am requested by Sergeant Cuff to set in writing certain facts, concerning three men (believed to be Hindoos) who were passengers, last summer, in the ship Bewley Castle, bound for Bombay direct, under my command.

The Hindoos joined us at Plymouth. On the passage out, I heard no complaint of their conduct. They were berthed in the forward part of the vessel. I had but few occasions myself of personally noticing them.

In the latter part of the voyage, we had the misfortune to be becalmed, for three days and nights, off the coast of India. I have not got the ship's Journal to refer to, and I cannot now call to mind the latitude and longitude. As to our position, therefore, I am only able to state generally that the currents drifted us in towards the land, and that when the wind found us again, we reached our port in twenty-four hours afterwards.

The discipline of a ship (as all sea-faring persons know) becomes relaxed in a long calm. The discipline of my ship became relaxed. Certain gentlemen among the passengers got some of the smaller boats lowered, and amused themselves by rowing about, and swimming, when the sun, at evening time, was cool enough to let them divert themselves in that way. The boats, when done with, ought to have been slung up again in their places. Instead of this, they were left moored to the ship's side. What with the heat, and what with the vexation of the weather, neither officers nor men seemed to be in heart for their duty while the calm lasted.

On the third night, nothing unusual was heard or seen by the watch on deck. When the morning came, the smallest of the boats was missing—and the three Hindoos were next reported to be missing too.

If these men had stolen the boat shortly after dark (which I have no doubt they did) we were near enough to the land to make it vain to send in pursuit of them, when the discovery was made in the morning. I have no doubt they got ashore, in that calm weather

(making all due allowance for fatigue and clumsy rowing), before daybreak.

On reaching our port, I there learnt, for the first time, the reason my three passengers had for seizing their opportunity of escaping from the ship. I could only make the same statement to the authorities which I have made here. They considered me to blame for allowing the discipline of the vessel to be relaxed. I have expressed my regret on this score to them, and to my owners. Since that time, nothing has been heard, to my knowledge, of the three Hindoos. I have no more to add to what is here written.

III.

THE STATEMENT OF MR. MURTHWAITE, (1850).

(*In a Letter to Mr. Bruff.*)

Have you any recollection, my dear sir, of a semi-savage person whom you met out at dinner, in London, in the autumn of 'forty-eight? Permit me to remind you that the person's name was Murthwaite, and that you and he had a long conversation together after dinner. The talk related to an Indian Diamond, called The Moonstone, and to a conspiracy then in existence to get possession of the gem.

Since that time, I have been wandering in Central Asia. Thence, I have drifted back to the scene of some of my past adventures in the north and north-west of India. About a fortnight since, I found myself in a certain district or province (but little known to Europeans) called Kattiawar.

Here, an adventure befel me, in which (incredible as it may appear) you are personally interested.

In the wild regions of Kattiawar (and how wild they are you will understand, when I tell you that even the husbandmen plough the land armed to the teeth), the population is fanatically devoted to the old Hindoo religion—to the ancient worship of Brahmah and Vishnu. The few Mahommedan families, thinly scattered about the villages in the interior, are afraid to taste meat of any kind. A Mahommedan even suspected of killing that sacred animal, the cow, is, as a matter of course, put to death without mercy in these parts, by the pious Hindoo neighbours who surround him. To strengthen the religious enthusiasm of the people, two of the most famous shrines of Hindoo pilgrimage are contained within the boundaries of Kattiawar. One of them is Dwarka, the birthplace of the god Krishna. The other is the sacred city of Somnauth—sacked and destroyed, as long since as the eleventh century, by the Mahommedan conqueror, Mahmoud of Ghizni.

Finding myself, for the second time, in these romantic regions, I resolved not to leave Kattiawar, without looking once more on the magnificent desolation of Somnauth. At the place where I planned to do this, I was (as nearly as I could calculate it) some three days distant, journeying on foot, from the sacred city.

I had not been long on the road, before I noticed, that other people—by twos and threes—appeared to be travelling in the same direction as myself.

To such of these as spoke to me, I gave myself out as a Hindoo-Boodhist, from a distant province, bound on a pilgrimage. It is needless to say that my dress was of the sort to carry out this description. Add, that I know the language as well as I know my own, and that I am lean enough and brown enough to make it no easy matter to detect my European origin—and you will understand that I passed muster with the people readily: not as one of themselves, but as a stranger from a distant part of their own country.

On the second day, the number of Hindoos travelling in my direction, had increased to fifties and hundreds. On the third day, the throng had swollen to thousands; all slowly converging to one point—the city of Somnauth.

A trifling service which I was able to render to one of my fellow-pilgrims, during the third day's journey, proved the means of introducing me to certain Hindoos of the higher caste. From these men I learnt that the multitude was on its way to a great religious ceremony, which was to take place on a hill at a little distance from Somnauth. The ceremony was in honour of the god of the Moon; and it was to be held at night.

The crowd detained us, as we drew near to the place of celebration. By the time we reached the hill, the moon was high in the heavens. My Hindoo friends possessed some special privileges which enabled them to gain access to the shrine. They kindly allowed me to accompany them. When we arrived at the place, we found the shrine hidden from our view, by a curtain hung between two magnificent trees. Beneath the trees, a flat projection of rock jutted out, and formed a species of natural platform. Below this, I stood, in company with my Hindoo friends.

Looking back down the hill, the view presented the grandest spectacle of Nature and Man, in combination, that I have ever seen. The lower slopes of the eminence melted imperceptibly into a grassy plain, the place of the meeting of three rivers. On one side, the graceful winding of the waters stretched away, now visible, now hidden by trees, as far as the eye could see. On the other, the waveless ocean slept in the calm of the night. People this lovely scene with tens of thousands of human creatures, all dressed in white, stretching down the sides of the hill, overflowing into the plain, and fringing the nearer banks of the winding rivers. Light this halt of the pilgrims, by the wild red flames of cressets and torches, streaming up at intervals from every part of the innumerable throng. Imagine the moonlight of the East, pouring in unclouded glory over all—and you will form some idea of

the view that met me, when I looked forth from the summit of the hill.

A strain of plaintive music, played on stringed instruments and flutes, recalled my attention to the hidden shrine.

I turned, and saw on the rocky platform, the figures of three men. In the central figure of the three, I recognised the man to whom I had spoken in England, when the Indians appeared on the terrace at Lady Verinder's house. The other two, who had been his companions on that occasion, were no doubt his companions also on this.

One of the Hindoos, near whom I was standing, saw me start. In a whisper, he explained to me the apparition of the three figures on the platform of rock.

They were Brahmins (he said) who had forfeited their caste, in the service of the god. The god had commanded that their purification should be the purification by pilgrimage. On that night, the three men were to part. In three separate directions, they were to set forth as pilgrims to the shrines of India. Never more were they to look on each other's faces. Never more were they to rest on their wanderings, from the day which witnessed their separation, to the day which witnessed their death.

As those words were whispered to me, the plaintive music ceased. The three men prostrated themselves on the rock, before the curtain which hid the shrine. They rose—they looked on one another—they embraced. Then they descended separately among the people. The people made way for them in dead silence. In three different directions, I saw the crowd part, at one and the same moment. Slowly, the grand white mass of the people closed together again. The track of the doomed men through the ranks of their fellow mortals was obliterated. We saw them no more.

A new strain of music, loud and jubilant, rose from the hidden shrine. The crowd around me shuddered and pressed together.

The curtain between the trees was drawn aside, and the shrine was disclosed to view.

There, raised high on a throne; seated on his typical antelope, with his four arms stretching towards the four corners of the earth—there soared above us, dark and awful in the mystic light of heaven, the god of the Moon. And there, in the forehead of the deity, gleamed the yellow Diamond, whose splendour had last shone on me, in England, from the bosom of a woman's dress!

Yes! after the lapse of eight centuries, the Moonstone looks forth once more over the walls of the sacred city in which its story first began. How it has found its way back to its wild native land—by what accident, or by what crime, the Indians regained possession of their sacred gem, may be in your knowledge, but is not in mine. You have lost sight of it in England, and (if I know anything of this people) you have lost sight of it for ever.

So the years pass, and repeat each other; so the same events revolve in the cycles of Time. What will be the next adventures of The Moonstone? Who can tell!

THE END.

CARNIVAL TIME IN BRITANY.

At daybreak one crisp February morning, we entered the quaint old city of Nantes, escorted by a motley caravan of peasants, who were wending their way with their various stock to the market square on the quays. After we had passed the seven ancient bridges which conduct from the southern bank of the Loire, over as many islands, to the northern bank, whereon the old Breton capital mainly lies; after we had taken a glimpse at the stunted-looking cathedral, which rears its square towers above the city, and had for an instant stopped to gaze at the old ducal castle, standing in an enormous ditch, half below the level of the street;—we reached at length the square on the crest of the hill upon which Nantes is built, where stands, inviting to a rather gloomy hospitality, the Hôtel de France.

Here took place a brief but lively struggle between hunger and weariness; but the garçon having conducted us to one of those almost oppressively comfortable rooms which you find sometimes in provincial France, and having, moreover, imparted to us the fact that breakfast would be served at eleven, and not an instant before, Tompkins abruptly declared for sleep by dropping heavily upon the bed—boots, coat, and all—and sounding a nasal trumpet in honour of tired nature's triumph. I have to thank my companion's snoring for the confused and martial dreams which followed me. Once I thought that the bugle blasts of the Black Prince were sounding in my ear, summoning me to the attack on the old Breton Castle; but I was held back by a crowd of screaming bonnes, with their long lace caps, who raised, with their shrill voices, a perfect pandemonium about my ears. In the midst of all this hubbub I awoke, rubbed my eyes, and turned over. More regularly than the ticks of the fantastic clock on the mantel, sounded still the snores of Tompkins; but an instant after I, lying there wide awake, heard the same screeching of bugles and yelling of bonnes, which I had thought a horrid dream.

I aroused Tompkins.

"Perhaps," said he, a trifle pale,—"perhaps it is a revolution!"

This gave a practical turn to the matter, and it luckily happened, that the garçon just then summoned us to breakfast.

"But what is all this hubbub?" asked I, in the choicest of "conversation-book" French.

"In the square, monsieur?" said the stolid Breton, as if nothing unusual were going on.

"Of course."

"To-morrow is the Mercredi des Cendres, monsieur," in a tone which expressed, "You're a noodle not to know it."

What to-morrow had to do with to-day's uproar, I could not exactly see, and so I intimated to him.

"The day before Ash Wednesday, monsieur, is Carnival day; therefore it is the Carnival which has disturbed Messieurs les Anglais."

You must know that Nantes, on all the days of the year excepting two, is the most droning, humdrum, stupid, sleepy old town between Biscay and the Bosphorus. But the two days when the ex-capital of Britany is galvanised into something resembling a wide-awake city, are the Sunday and the Tuesday before the beginning of Lent.

We hastily consumed the conventional Breton breakfast which was set before us—the soup and St. Emilion, the fried fish and filet de bœuf, the sour bread and preserves, the shrimps and watercresses—and Tompkins, for once, in his anxiety to get out, forgot to grumble at the absence of coffee.

A Nantes merchant, who was a bachelor and lived at the hotel, hearing our conversation, politely offered to show us the sights.

"I beg you, messieurs," said he, in the grand Breton style, "not to wear holiday suits."

"Why not?"

"Because," he replied, smiling, "orange juice gives a somewhat unpleasant variety to the colour of one's cloth."

Later in the day we knew what he meant, to our cost.

Accompanied by our new friend, we passed from the hotel court into the square. The steps of the theatre opposite were covered with a perfect forest of bonnes' caps. The tops of the houses, the balconies and windows, and the the side-walks, were crowded with lookers-on, who were boisterously enjoying the scene. Here was a totally new phase of the Breton character, which I had thought, from previous experience, stolid and phlegmatic. It was not such a scene as you witness in the bal masqué at the Paris Opera. It was more free and boisterous, more overflowing with homely fun; far more original in the costumes, the antics, and the contagious high spirits of the actors. I almost shrank back into the sheltered precincts of the hotel, as I saw a party of screaming bonnes come rushing towards where we stood, blowing their tin trumpets and waving their brawny arms. Groups of men and women and boys were scattered over the square, in every conceivable disguise, and performing every conceivable caper, crowding and hustling and shouting, maliciously pursuing the bonnes who were not disguised, but had only come out to see the fun, lustily blowing uncouth horns, and each trying to outvie the others. Perhaps the most amusing of all were the multitudes of little wild gamins —poor ragged urchins, whose home is the street, whose bed is the doorstep, and whose food comes how and when chance ordains—and chimney-sweeps, with their sooty merry faces; these held high orgies in the streets.

After observing the scene in front of the hotel awhile, our obliging Breton friend conducted us through the long and narrow Rue Crebillon, the main thoroughfare of Nantes, which was already so crowded with masquers and spectators that we moved with great difficulty, and were persecuted by the merrymakers at every step. The old houses were supplied, on every story, with long iron balconies; and upon one of these we took up our position. From the point at which we stood, we could sweep with our eyes the whole street, terminating in a square at either end; and here it was that we saw the Carnival in all its glory.

Tompkins, despite the benevolent warning of monsieur, our friend, had insisted on wearing the shining silk hat which he had just purchased at Bordeaux; for he is somewhat foppish, and had caught sight of the damsels who, in jaunty French costumes, filled windows in every direction. We had hardly taken our places on the balcony when poor Tompkins's hat danced off sportively in mid-air, closely pursued by a shattered orange, until both were lost sight of in the surging crowd beneath.

We were now pelted with a storm of the same too juicy fruit, which came from right and left of us. Orange women, with huge basketsful of their popular stock, were pressing to and fro in the throng, selling their oranges by the dozen at a time, while the air was thick with the yellow fruit as it sped to and from the balconies. It was an equal warfare between man and man; the strongest arm and truest eye were sure of the victory. On the balconies on either side of the street might be seen groups of jauntily dressed gentlemen, each with his stock of oranges; and when any peculiarly amusing masquers passed in the line of vehicles, these would open the battle by pouring down upon them fruity hail. Then would ensue a most vigorous retort, the carriage of the attacked party stopping, and delaying the whole procession until they had "had it out." Tompkins was in a measure consoled by seeing hats, but now as glossy as his own, flying crushed in every direction, and falling to the ground, trodden to flatness by the crowd. Now, the ridiculously long proboscis of some Carnival Achilles is whisked off and sent flying yards away; now, a monkish beard is shaven close and clean, and its loosened hairs fall in a shower over the people round about. Sometimes, the combatants, with their stubborn Celtic blood, are goaded to a momentary warmth on either side; then the oranges fly thick and fast and at haphazard, and are thrown, in the blindness of sudden choler, furiously into the crowd at large; where, mayhap, they yield their fragrance on the person of an unoffending priest, as in long gown and broad-brimmed hat he hastens nervously along; or attack some pompous old coachman, in wig and livery, who, as he is soberly conducting his master's carriage through the throng, receives an orange plump in the eye, or, before he knows it, finds his gold-banded hat missing from its horsehair pinnacle.

But these orange battles were not confined

to manly combatants; there were Amazonian jousts, which threw the others far into the shade. Now and then a squad of gendarmes would rush in upon a party of combatants, and with loud voices and much gesticulation seek to end the fray—for this orange pelting is really against the law—but then the opponents of those thus interfered with, would pour down a resistless volley upon the agents of order, who would thereon ignominiously retreat. No one was safe from the juicy missiles, which flew to and fro as far as the eye could see on either side; and the screaming, and laughing, and howling, and "sacrrre-bleu"-ing could be heard echoing everywhere through the narrow streets of the usually drowsy old town.

The shops were all closed, excepting that here and there some enterprising tradesman had lent out his windows (at a napoleon a-piece); the church bells were ringing lustily; over the public buildings the national tricolour had been raised in honour of the festivity; and every now and then would emerge from some side street a long train of peasants, in the quaint costume of their district, who had trudged, mayhap, some dozen miles that morning, to have their share of the Carnival frolic. In the street which lay below us, narrow, and enclosed between six and seven-story houses, a rolling, running, shouting crowd were tiding this way and that, without method or distinction; a mosaic of peasants and shopkeepers, of portly old aristocrats and blue-blouses, of boys and policemen, of devils and crusaders, harlequins and Turks, Bottoms and bandits—the scene and colour changing with kaleidoscopic swiftness; a pandemonium of noises, from the famous Breton fish cry, to the discordant squeaks of violins and the many-keyed caterwauling of the less musical mass. In the midst of the crowd struggled painfully the long line of vehicles which made up the procession of the Carnival. These were of every imaginable sort; there were the carriages and four of the prefect and of the mayor, sandwiched between boxes on wheels and rustic donkey carts; there were the stately lookers-on from the aristocratic Cour St. Pierre, and the humble but witty masquers from the neighbouring villages. Mingled together, and jumbled into an almost indistinguishable mass, was this medley of classes, for one day democratically free and equal, enjoying that "one touch of nature," love of humour, which "makes the whole world kin." I never shall forget Monsieur the Prefect, as he sat in his carriage with its heraldic blazon, its powdered and gold fringed coachman and footman, with a half-embarrassed smile upon his face; while all about him was this weird mass of boisterous masquers, waging their orange war, and giving to the picture of official dignity a most ludicrous frame indeed. The vehicles which contained the masquers were laughable enough. Now, you would see a moving castle, with its bastions, its turrets, its port holes, and its donjon-keep; and from its towers, burlesque knights in cuirass and helmet, would pelt right and left, supplied with an armoury of oranges; while their paper shields would soon yield to the energetic response of the balconies above. Next, would come an imitation house, out of whose windows masculine bonnes were leaning and fighting with Amazonian force. Anon, you would observe a countryman, in the costume of some remote village, prancing along on his donkey, and mimicking to the life rustic angularity. A favourite joke seemed to be to imitate the street beggars who were familiar to the town, There was a cart fitted up as a circus; and here were chattering clowns, and mock acrobats, and pretentious ballet dancers, ludicrously like. There were men dressed as bonnes, who rushed about with bonne-like nervousness, and seized the opportunity to kiss the genuine bonnes (provided they were pretty), who were so unlucky as to come in their way. One little urchin, besmirched from top to toe, who was mounted on a donkey cart, whisked off a gendarme's chapeau, and clapped it on his own stubby head, replacing it by his greasy and fragmentary cap; then rode dancing off, screaming with glee; while the guardian of order, inclined to be severely indignant, yet unable to resist the infectious merriment about him, hastened laughing after him.

One of the spectrums that whisked by, was a sheaf of corn, whose ears flapped to and fro in harmony with its movement, and which showed certain very clear indications of being a sheaf of the gentler sex. In the midst of the procession was a Tower of Babel, with little figures of workmen employed in erecting that piece of presumptuous architecture. Here, stalked by an apparently marble pedestal, which anon would stop, and stand stock still, as if it had been rooted to the spot for ages; and confidential couples, who had something *very* particular to say, would conceal themselves behind it, the occupant of the pedestal listening with great glee to their muttered confidences. The variety of illustrations from natural history—the bears, and kangaroos, and gorillas, and giraffes—would have shamed the Zoological Gardens; while the Grand Exposition was well nigh outdone by the representatives of all nations, who hurried along. Underneath the windows, where the Breton belles sat laughing at the scene, a group of serenaders, decked in romantic costumes, would stop, and howl forth a burlesque lute scene from Don Giovanni; while, at a little distance, some dancers, setting a table on the side-walk, would proceed to perform thereon a rollicking "break-down," to the general delight.

And so round and round, for four mortal hours, this quaint procession wound, and the thousands of throats, becoming hoarser and hoarser as the day advanced, sustained their unremitting hubbub. At length the carriages and the donkey-carts, the chaises and the castles, as they repassed, showed signs of a long and severe siege. There were oranges and orange-juice everywhere; broken pieces of

orange lay in piles within them, and stuck to their wheels and sides; the dresses, hats, and faces were covered with the yellow stain of oranges. The warriors of the day began to look jaded and worn; to take off their heavy hats, stifling and dilapidated masks, and sit limp in their seats, and refresh themselves with wine and rest.

Shortly after four (the Carnival having begun at noon) the crowd began to slacken, vehicles began to drop out of the route, and the procession to show long gaps in its line. Everybody seemed to be hastening to the square and the steps of the theatre, and soon the procession had disappeared, excepting that now and then an unusually persevering party came rollicking up the street, singing some rude Breton song, and trying to provoke one last battle by launching the flattened oranges, which yet remained, at the tired crowd. By this time the masquers were somewhat the worse—or, considering their greater vivacity and humour, perhaps somewhat the better—for the white wine, which is freely drunk, as may be imagined, on Carnival day; and in the square, and on the portico of the theatre, the orgie was still kept up, until the thick dusk of a moonless February evening threw a damper on the revellers, and sent them reeling, singing, frolicking homeward.

"A curious sight," remarked Tompkins, as we descended, and passed into the street, "but after a fellow has been travelling all night, a little too long to keep one's interest alive. I'm glad it's over."

"Over?" said our Breton friend, with a shrug and lifted eyebrows. "Then monsieur does not care to see how they finish the Carnival?"

"By Jove! Is there anything more?"

"If monsieur is not too tired, after dinner, we will go to one of the cabarets, and see the Carnival dance."

Tompkins consented with a grunt; for, tired as he might be, he was determined, as he said, "to have his money's worth out of these Frenchmen."

We passed through a zig-zag labyrinth of narrow streets and dingy alleys, and finally descended to a cellar some steps below the level of the street, where we found ourselves in a buvette, with a sanded floor, and where some labourers were busy drinking the favourite white wine. Our guide led us along a dark narrow passage to a long, low-studded, rudely-built hall, with brick floor, and tallow candles disposed at rare intervals along the wall. The guests were of the working classes, and were dressed in their every-day attire, the long lace coifs of the damsels being conspicuous everywhere. We had just taken our seats when a portly, jovial old fellow, his head surmounted by a square paper cap, entered, followed by two garçons, who brought in a large table, and set it in the middle of the room. Anon the landlord reappeared with a huge bowl, from whence a savoury steam arose and filled the air. Shouts of delight greeted the good cheer; glasses were quickly filled; while a great brawny fellow with shaggy red hair, jumped upon the table, and gesticulating as only a Frenchman can, burst into a loud, wild drinking song. When he came to the chorus—which was something about oh yes, we'll drink till the dawn, or some sentiment equally original—it was roared out lustily by the rest; men and women jumped on the table and waved their hands, or danced with a wild glee which was positively catching. Another round of punch brought out, in spite of the law, the glorious Marseillaise, which sounded even grandly, so fervid were the voices, and so earnest the faces. The drinking over, the table was quickly pushed aside, the floor was swept, and partners were chosen. Two sprightly blue-bloused fellows stationed themselves on a raised bench, with fiddle and trumpet, and forthwith struck up a lively waltz. And such waltzing as ensued! Without rhyme or method, these lusty folk whirled off at every angle, regardless of consequences, and wholly given up to the moment's ecstasy. Now and then there would be a general over tumbling, couple after couple coming to the ground, and presenting to the beholder a confused spectacle of petticoats and cotton stockings hopelessly mixed up with blue blouses and wooden shoes. The revel ended with a grand jig, a combination of an Irish jig and fashionable ballet, performed by a blue blouse and a bonne. So frantically did they distort their bodies, and pose themselves; the man throwing the girl over his shoulder, she kneeling and he bounding over her head; that every moment you almost expected them to fall to pieces. The man, as he danced, smoked a long cigar; and now and then a long puff of smoke, issuing from his mouth, produced a very ludicrous effect.

AT THE CLUB WINDOW.

I. POCOCURANTE.

Sitting alone at the window,
  I watch the crowd of people,
And study as they pass me
  The warp and woof of life;
Woven with good and evil,
  With sorrow and rejoicing,
With peace and true affection,
  With agony and strife.

I think as the old men saunter,
  Of the pangs they all have suffered,
In the hard up-mountain struggle,
  To the bare and frosty cope:
Of their patience and endurance,
  And the victory snatched from Fortune,
Out of the pangs of death,
  Or at best forlornest hope.

I think, neither sad nor happy,
  But filled with a vague surmising,
That the young men strutting so proudly
  Must run the self-same race;
No pity for the hindmost,
  And much applause for the foremost;
Applause and pity both idle,
  To the heart not right in its place.

I think as Lazarus passes,
 That perhaps he has had his chances,
And knew not how to use them,
 To make himself rich and great,
And lift himself up to the summit,
 Too dizzy, perchance, to be envied,
But proud enough to scorn
 All men of meaner estate.

I think that Dives flaunting
 His riches in the sunshine,
May owe his gold to his fathers,
 Not a penny to himself.
And that all things taken together,
 Men are but busy spiders;
That Fate the busier housewife
 Leaves on, or sweeps off the shelf.

But I neither laugh nor sigh
 At the rights or wrongs I witness;
I take the world as it passes
 And would mend it if I might.
But as I cannot, I may not,
 And so go home to my pillow,
And wrap myself in the blankets,
 And wish it a calm good night.

II. THE DEMI-SEMI LUNATIC.

Says Fate to the Fated,
 "Unravel my skein."
Says the Fated to Fate
 "'Twere eternally vain."
Says Body to Soul,
 "We are mysteries twain."
"Wherein do we differ?"
 Says Pleasure to Pain;
"Are not living and dying
 Mere links in a chain?
And is not the antidote
 Part of the bane?"
Unriddle my riddle
 Oh sphinx of the plain!
It weighs on my spirit
 It addles my brain.

III. THE ANGRY PESSIMIST.

You prefer a buffoon to a scholar,
A harlequin to a teacher,
A jester to a statesman,
An Anonyma flaring on horseback
To a modest and spotless woman—
 Brute of a public!

You think that to sneer shows wisdom,
That a gibe outvalues a reason.
That slang, such as thieves delight in,
Is fit for the lips of the gentle,
And rather a grace than a blemish,
 Thick headed public!

You think that if merit's exalted
'Tis excellent sport to decry it,
And trail its good name in the gutter;
And that cynics, white-gloved and cravated,
Are the cream and quintessence of all things,
 Ass of a public!

You think that success is a merit,
That honour and virtue and courage
Are all very well in their places,
But that money's a thousand times better;
Detestable, stupid, degraded,
 Pig of a public!

IV. THE EPICUREAN.

What is the use of plodding,
 Plodding for ever and ever,
To gain the bright half million,
 That shall lift us above the crowd?
And dying, a full nine-tenths of us
 Without a sole enjoyment,
Worthy a true man's taking,
 By kindly Heaven allowed?

I'm not afraid to be humble,
 For though my fortune's little
I make that little suffice
 For the pleasures it can buy:
A pint of Claret or Rhenish,
 Or a well-cooked dish in season,
A book, a gem, or a picture,
 To please the mind and eye.

I've something to spare for the needy
 Who make no trade of their sorrow,
And as much as half my income
 For the wants of the friends I love;
And I pity and laugh at the selfish
 And self-degrading zanies,
Who look so much beneath them,
 That they cannot see above.

It signifies little—thinking—
 So I shall go home to dinner,
And drinking a flask of Burgundy
 The King and the Pope of wine;
I'll pledge my love (my wife),
 Like "rare old Ben" in the ditty,
Who left a kiss in the goblet,
 As I can do in mine.

I'll laugh: we'll laugh and be happy,
 And free of hatred and envy,
We'll think in our single mindedness
 That we are truly wise;
And if we are not—what matters?
 For if love and satisfaction
Be not the best of wisdom,
 I care not where wisdom *lies*.

PLAIN ENGLISH.

If every other part of life in this island of ours be (as we are by some expected to believe) perfect, our method of teaching is defective, and sadly defective; painfully out of the straight line, and immeasurably below the ideal point. Our school-books seem written for children not to understand, rather than to make difficult things easy to them, and obscure things plain. Dry details from which every pictorial fact has been cut out; dull catalogues of mere words to which no living interest is attached; dates without a single dramatic incident to help towards the remembering of them; lists of battles and of kings, for history; lists of chief towns, of departments, of rivers, and of vague and awful "boundaries," for geography; these are the cheerful means by which we endeavour to make children love their books, and think learning better than houses or lands. It is one of the strange contradictions of human nature, that we go on seeing evils, and lamenting them, but never attempt to remedy them. We know that our method of teaching the young, our school-books, and our range of

lessons, are all equally preposterous, and yet we do nothing to mend them. It seems as if we believed in some wholesome influence of mental pain. As though, by making knowledge especially difficult we made it especially valuable, and planted the seeds effectually, in proportion to the anguish of the operation!

There are four things which may be taken as the cardinal points of education—grammar, arithmetic, history, and geography; four names of torture to the young, but which, under any rational system of teaching, might be made four sources of pleasure and interest. As for grammar, which is the only one of the four to be touched on here, one might think that some intellectual Herod had been the compiler of most of the published treatises; and that his object was the hopeless bewildering of youthful brains, and the final snuffing out of youthful intellectual light. Yet even grammar might be made full of what artists call colour, if we chose to study the best way of setting it forth. Certainly that way is not to be found in Lindley Murray; with his dull rules rattling against the mind, like dry bones; without a morsel of flesh to cover their anatomy; nor yet is the way to be found in some of the modern issues, which are even more pedantic than Lindley Murray, and infinitely more bewildering. Here are two instances of modern grammar-writing. In one little work, otherwise sensible, the following classification of adverbs is commended to the young learner: "Adverbs of *quality*, of *affirmation*, of *contingency*, of *negation*, of *explaining*, of *separation*, of *conjunction*, of *interrogation*, of *pre-eminence*, of *defect*, of *preference*, of *equality*, of *inequality*, of *gradation*, of *in a place*, of *to a place*, of *toward a place*, of *from a place*, of *time present*, of *time past*, of *time future*, of *time indefinitely*, of *time definitely*, of *order*, and of *quantity*."* Another author of a practical grammar, divides adverbs into nine classes, and conjunctions into sixteen. Among these, are adverbs that express *manner* by *quality*, *manner* by *degree*, and *manner* by *affirmation*—whatever these terms may mean. Among the conjunctions, are conjunctions of *purpose*, of *condition*, of *concession*, and so on. When teachers attempt to cram such indigestible material as this into the tender brains of youth, who can wonder if those brains obstinately and vehemently refuse to be fed upon the husks and chaff offered them for food? Who can expect any other than the general result of ordinary schooling, which is, that boys and girls will do their best to forget all that their masters and mistresses have made believe to teach them, and that the real education begins when the "scholastic courses" end?

Almost all grammar-writers have a great dislike to short words instead of long words, and to Saxon words instead of Latin words. You must "accumulate," not "heap up," if you would please them; you must "exclude," not "shut out;" you must "commence," not "begin;" you must "be profound," rather than "deep;" and you must be very particular to be "implicated in a certain transaction," instead of "mixed up in some matter." One grammarian sets his face against "by dint of argument," "not a whit better," "the tables are turned," &c., as wanting in that vague virtue called purity of style; another advises, as a more elegant mode of diction, "I prefer mercy to sacrifice," instead of "I will have mercy and not sacrifice;" and thinks "he violated his promise," infinitely better style than "he broke his word." "The devouring element" is high-polite for "fire;" "he gave utterance to a sentiment," is far before the plain "he said;" "to signify assent," beats the sturdy "Yes" all to nothing. Even a great preacher—great in eloquence, great in goodness, great in mind—maundered once into "the source of light dispersing its rays," when all he wanted to say was simply "the sunshine."

Grammar-writers, and the teachers of grammar, do even more than this. Not content with taking all the pith and marrow out of the English language, and making it a mere anglicised Latin (so far as they are able), they still further perplex the youthful learner by the gnarled and hopeless subject of their themes. "Which do you prefer, a classical or commercial education? State your reasons." This is one of the questions calmly put to the boy of twelve or fourteen for whom this grammar is written. "What inferences are you entitled to draw from the extension of railways to all parts of the country?" is another question. "*Prove* a future state of rewards and punishments," is a third tickler. "The first request is an impossible one," says Mr. Meiklejohn, from whom these extracts are quoted; the second is absurd and senseless; and the third is surely beyond the powers of most grown-up people. Answers are likewise expected to such questions as these: "Is Law or Physic more advantageous?" "Is Agriculture or Commerce preferable?" Considering the experience of fourteen years of age, these questions are certainly occasions for the exercise of some imagination.

But to go back to grammar, pure and simple. We all know what utter weariness of spirit, what headaches, confusion of mind, moral prostration, and personal disgrace, what rivulets of tears, and dire punishments of various kinds, have marked the path of those Juggernauts of the school-room—the makers of grammars written not to be understood. And yet this most painful of all the dry sticks given to the young to transform into a flowering branch, might be made interesting if treated as it ought to be treated; that is, in connexion with history and other matters having some relation to human life. Any one who has taught intelligently, or seen intelligent teaching, in a school, must remember with what delight children receive lessons which are made dramatic or pictorial. The dullest fact, if helped out with

* Quoted from a lecture (What is and What may be Meant by Teaching English), by J. M. D. Meiklejohn, M.A.

any collateral information connecting it with human life or animate existence, has a charm for the young that at once fixes it in their memories; and a dense-witted, wearied, yawning class can be brightened up into a little circle of bright-eyed listeners all agape for knowledge, if the teacher strike out of the stupid old droning track, and begin his next section with an anecdote or an illustration.

There is one part of grammar, at present a terrible weariness and vexation of spirit, which might be made very pleasant reading, and that is the derivation of words. There are better methods of teaching this art and mystery than by mere lists of Greek and Latin roots; and in an admirable section called the Matter of the English Language, Mr. Meiklejohn has shown in his Easy English Grammar how charmingly this subject can be treated. Though our language is an aggregation of many materials, rather than one broad stream flowing from one original source, and merely changing by the way, yet it has a certain inner life of its own which assimilates all these varying materials, and welds them into one harmonious whole. Certainly the manner of construction is somewhat irregular, and the application is not unfrequently strained, but this is because we have never given any serious scientific attention to the creation or preservation of our tongue, but have trusted to chance and haphazard, and the natural cohesion of verbal particles, when once placed in contact with each other. Consequently, a full and exhaustive system of analysis and derivation shows some strange and unlooked-for results. Once all Keltic, we have now comparatively few words of the old tongue left among us. The Thames, the Severn, and the Trent; the Mendip Hills, the Chiltern, and the Malvern; Devon, Wilts, Kent; London, Dover, Liverpool, are all Keltic names of rivers, hills, counties, and towns respectively; so are names of places beginning with Aber, the mouth of a river, as Arbroath, formerly Aberbrothwick, and Aberwick, now Berwick; the names of places beginning with Caer, a fort, as Carlisle, Carnarvon, Caerlton; with Dun, a hill, as Dumbarton, Dunmore, Huntingdon; with Lin, a deep pool, as Linlithgow, King's Lynn; with Llann, a church, as Llandaff, Llanberis; with Tre, a town, as Coventry (or convent town); with Inver, the mouth of a river, as Inverness, Inverary. Also certain common words are Keltic, as basket, trap, cart, gown, pike, crag, whip, brave, cloud, plaid, crockery, tartan, darn, wire, mattock, mop, rasher, rug, button, crook, kiln, flannel, gyves, gruel, welt, mesh, rail, glue, tackle, coat, pranks, balderdash, happy, pert, sham, and others. The Scandinavian or Norse element is found chiefly in the provincial dialects of Northumberland, Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Cumberland, and Westmoreland, where we have force for waterfall, greet for weep, ket for carrion, and lile for little; "all of which," says Mr. Meiklejohn, from whom we are quoting, and who is responsible for these assertions, "are pure Scandinavian words." In the names of places we have by for village, in Whitby, Grimsby, &c.; fell for hill (Norse fjeld) in Crossfell, Scawfell; gill (this should be spelt ghyll), a ravine, in Ormesgill; Scar, a steep rock, in Scarborough; Tarn, a small deep lake, in Tarnsyke, &c. Had Mr. Meiklejohn been acquainted with the lake country, he could have infinitely enriched and amended his examples, but we have taken what we have found, there being enough to illustrate the principle. There are said to be thirteen hundred and seventy-three names of places in England, of Danish or Norse origin, among which are the islands ending in ey—ey, ea, or æ, being all different forms of the Norse word for an island—as Jersey, Cæsar's Island; Athelney, Noble's Island; Anglesea, island of the Angles, &c.

The greatest addition to our language has been from the Latin, either directly to a small extent, during the Roman occupation from A.D. 43 to 480, or to a large extent when Roman missionaries introduced Christianity among us in A.D. 596; or indirectly, by the introduction of the Norman-French language and literature in the time of Edward the Confessor first, and later, when William the Conqueror came. The Latin element in English comprises ten-fortieths of the whole; the purely English is twenty-five fortieths; and the remaining five-fortieths are made up of Keltic, Greek, Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, Italian, Hindostanee, Spanish, Dutch — in fact, from words of almost every language of the globe. One hundred and fifty-four Greek and Latin roots give thirteen thousand English words. From pono, to place, we have two hundred and fifty words; from plico, to fold, two hundred; from capio, to take, one hundred and ninety-seven; from specio, to see, one hundred and seventy-seven; from mitto, to send, one hundred and seventy-four; from teneo, to hold, one hundred and sixty-eight; from tendo, to stretch, one hundred and sixty-two; from duco, to lead, one hundred and fifty-six; from logos, a word, one hundred and fifty-six; from grapho, to write, one hundred and fifty-two. Yet great as is this classic influence, it is greater in the fixed than in the moving language. We write down in our dictionaries one-fourth or ten-fortieths of Latin words, we speak from thirty-six to thirty-nine-fortieths of Saxon words, and we write from twenty-nine to thirty-eight-fortieths of the same Saxon. In Macaulay's essay on Bacon there are thirty Saxon words out of every forty, while in the New Testament there are thirty-seven. "All the common words of every-day use, all the joints of the language, all that makes it an organism, all the words that express the *life* of individuals or of the nation are pure English. In one word, all that makes a language a language is English; the Latin element merely fills up gaps and interstices."

Another odd and interesting part of grammar is the tracking out of the meanings of words changed by constant application. Thus, gazette, which was once gazetta, a small Venetian coin said to have been the price of the first news-

paper, is now the newspaper itself; bombast, formerly a stuff of soft loose texture, used to stuff out clothes, is now a pompous inflated style; boor, a rustic, is now an ignorant ill-mannered person; villain, a serf, is a wretch; pagan, a villager, is a heathen; lumber, or things formerly stowed away in a Lombard's or banker's room, is now any kind of useless accumulation—in America, timber; treacle was anciently theriaç, a remedy against poison, and specially an electuary made of various drugs pounded together and mixed with honey, now it is only molasses, the syrup which runs from sugar; stationer, or a man with a stall or station for selling goods, is a man who sells paper and pens, &c., only; romance, the Roman language, is the kind of fictitious literature originally written in that language; cheque, a chequered cloth for counting money, is a piece of paper representing money; and stool, a chair, is now really a chair for the feet. These are just a few instances of what might be done towards making the study of grammar attractive to the young, and investing nouns and verbs with a human and therefore a living interest.

Another thing rarely taught at all, and never taught well, is the art of correct and beautiful speaking. How few people can read aloud decently, or speak properly and pleasantly! As for accent, the chances are as ninety-nine to a hundred that it will be thrown in the wrong place; as in that famous example of the clergyman who, having to read how Saul after solicitation was persuaded to eat, read it thus: "And the woman had a fat calf in the house, and she hasted and killed it, and took flour, and kneaded it, and did bake unleavened bread thereof. And she brought it before Saul and before his servants, and they DID eat!" Children are never taught to manage the voice in speaking. Singing comes into the category of an art, and therefore attention is paid to it, but speaking is of the natural functions only, and for this nature alone is made answerable. Few nations speak so badly as the English. We all know the clipping, drawling, mouth-shut murmur in which the young man of the period speaks; we all know the sharp, short, asthmatic, catchy way in which some of the girls of the period speak; or that deep chest-voice affected by the more horsey kind; or that shrill head-voice delighted in by the fast sort not specially horsey; or that thin half-whining voice which some of the more quiet and modest kind seem to think part of their quietness, and essential to their modesty. The great aim of most young people seems to be to clip off their words as many letters and syllables as they possibly can, and to make what remains as indistinct as they can. It seems as if the horror of trouble which is infesting a certain section of our young people had extended to the labours of the lips; and that the neat and careful formation of words was something quite beyond the ordinary energies of life. The first thing which strikes all English people who have ears and keen perception of sounds, on returning from the Continent, is the lazy, drawling, slovenly manner of speech current among our countrymen and countrywomen. Not a letter has its due value, and none of the nicer shades of intonation are given. Those subtle distinctions which are so finely marked in the French manner of speech are with us ignored altogether; and we give such words as witch and which, where and wear, rain and reign, without the faintest sound of difference; while we clip cousin to coz'n, clothes to clo's, preference to pref'rence, slur often into orfen, put h's after s's or soft z's, muddle up fortune into fortshun, and figure into figgur.

Besides this grave delinquency in pronunciation, we often speak ungrammatically in our current daily conversation. How many stumble hopelessly over the traps of I and me; and how many get entangled in the difficulties of the past tense and the past participle! "That is between you and I only," is a phrase by no means rarely heard; "it is me," is even less rare. A very common error lies in taking the plural verb immediately after the plural noun, though the noun with which it rightly agrees is in the singular. "One after another of my children have gone;" "the last of his enemies have died;" while, even in writing, such horrible English as "neither he nor she were there," is constantly to be met with.

It is very much to be regretted that language has been made of little account in our English education; that we have no standard of excellence, either for grammar or pronunciation; and that we take no pains with the organ if even we had this standard as our rule. Schools, where deportment and dancing, and how to get into a carriage gracefully, and how to come into a room with an air, are taught, leave the voice and daily speech alone, trusting solely to the power of imitation for a correct method of pronunciation and the avoidance of any gross mistakes in grammar, but never making the management or modulation of the voice of any real account, nor holding the art of conversation as an art useful to be learned and necessary to be studied, before it can be practised. It would be a good thing if the teachers of our young people could and would take in hand the art of speaking: both with regard to the management of the voice and the carefulness of conversational grammar, as well as with regard to conversation itself.

DOGS WE HAVE HAD.

A VERY yellow, wiry, not to say stubbly terrier of the middle size, with ears cropped to the pattern that suggests the sharp points of the old-fashioned, now exploded "gills;" with iron-grey whiskers, and a general air of watchful inquiry for rats; brought back with a string round her, by a ragged boy. This is Vixen the First, originally purchased in open market, and who, after a day's absence, has been brought home. Her ransom costs half-a-crown. Her first introduction to the family

had been from under a hall chair, whither she had retreated, and whence she looked warily. When it was attempted to draw her from this lair (disrespectfully by the neck), she growled and snapped. On this display of an evil soul, it was almost resolved to deport her, but on entreaty one chance was given her, of which she availed herself so speedily, so engagingly, as to become an universal favourite, the best of companions, most honest of creatures. This was in the old school days, when the alliance between dog and boy is of the strictest sort. There is a feeling of *equality*, then. She shared in everything. As *he* read and studied, she had her corner, where, coiled up into something like a snail-shell, and making a pillow of her own hind leg, she dreamed the most exquisite dreams, and groaned over charming processions of endless rats. There were more delightful holidays when the sun was shining, and we went forth for the whole day's walking—a prospect she had forethought of, and enjoyed as much as her master. Then, after miles of walking, we came to the park, and the copses, and sat under a tree, and basked in the sun; the master finding Rookwood excellent company, while the Vixen, with a profoundly business-like air, cultivated her natural history, and explored the district as if she were a canine botanist, bound to report on the Flora of the region. Surely, in these burrowings and upturnings, these testings with eye and nose, they see and discover as many things of interest. Sometimes she would start a rabbit, and pursue it, hopelessly; but these were rare openings. Very pleasant were those bivouacs, and I feel the scent of the May blossoms floating past me now.

Once, there was a large review of soldiers in this place, and we agreed to go together, as usual. But I noticed that the Vixen was rather taken aback by the long files of red coats: taking a few steps towards them, halting, and, with suspicious inquiry in the nostrils, scrutinising the arrangements up and down. She did not like the distant bugle, and looked round uneasily. So, with the hoarse sounds of command, the faint hum and clatter, and the tinkling of arms, chains, and bridles; these unpastoral associations were not what she expected, and she made slow progress, drawing back her head and putting the question with her quivering nostrils: "What the deuce, my dear fellow, is all this?" But when the artillery came thundering and clanking up beside us, and the first gun and the second nearly shook her off her balance, without a second's delay, she fled, with ears down, body stretched out, hare-like, a victim of sudden panic, scouring the wide plain. I beheld her between two lines of soldiers. I saw her through the smoke, giving one hurried glance over her shoulder. For her, the end of *her* world was come. Pandemonium was at her heels. Grief and rage filled my heart. My companion was gone for ever—gone into that cloud of smoke. I should never see her again. I made a vain attempt at pursuit, but saw her grow into a yellow speck, far away over the plain. It was all over. I was alone. What was a review now to me? I was miles from home, and towards home I now went, moodily, and in deep grief. There, faces of surprise and eager questions met me. "What have you done with The Vixen?" Question answered testily, I fear with petulance even. Tired and heated, not in the mood to be questioned, I entered the study, about to fling myself into the easy-chair, and mourn privately and wearily. When lo! I see *in* the easy-chair; fagged also, and very dusty and travel-stained, the yellow runaway, the sauve qui peut, lifting her head, as if it were from a pillow, languidly, wagging her tail, uncertain whether about to receive punishment or congratulation. The boyish heart condoned everything—nay, deemed that she had rather won honours. She had never taken that journey before, yet had made her way home by an unfamiliar road, and must have travelled at headlong speed.

We were always on the best and most familiar terms, and yet she had a quick temper. She was passionate; but *she knew that failing, and controlled it.* On a few occasions a little chastisement was threatened, and she retreated under a chair, and there, as from a fortification, looked out, all tusks, and teeth, and snarl, with her upper lip turned inside out, filled with a demoniacal fury. The next moment she would be all love and friendliness.

She was not regarded with much favour above stairs, as wanting refinement and elegant manners. It was as though one had "taken up" with a friend of low estate. I think she was aware of this unreasonable prejudice, and, regarding it as insurmountable, never attempted to soften it away. In this she showed her sagacity; yet once when there was company, a gentleman playing the violin—an instrument she detested—the door was pushed open softly, and she entered, bearing a large junk of stolen beef. There was a kind of pride in her achievement, with yet a latent sense of the unlawfulness of the act, there was an air of guilt, and also of stolid audacity in the manner in which she entered, walking slowly and leisurely in through the midst of the company—half skulking, half inviting attention, her eyes rolling round the corner towards her master with a comic expression of doubt. The scene was true comedy, for it was a polite meeting—silks and fine clothes, tea and the "quality"—and the intruder, wiry and unkempt and a little dusty, had come direct from the stable. Was it the vanity of her sex prompted her to pay that visit with her purloined booty? Was it ambition, or a love of fine company? She was free of the kitchen, or, better still, the garden, where, with that grizzly nose of hers, she had dug many a little pit, using the same feature afterwards as a shovel, to cover up secreted treasure.

Vixen the First lived many years, during which we enjoyed many delightful country walks together, and she killed innumerable rats, and swam in rivers and brooks, and fought

other dogs with credit and reputation, and was a most pliant and entertaining companion. Sometimes her tastes, being of a vagabond sort, led her away from home in the company of dogs about town, who were of wild and even profligate manners. These excesses gave her a taste for the pleasures of the table, and an immoderate fancy for meat, which had the usual fatal results of a free life. In due time she was laid up with an attack of the malady so fatal to canine personal charms. There was the usual fierce scratchings, and finally the wiry hair began to come off in patches. Eminent physicians were called in, and some sort of cure effected. But the moral weakness was not to be eradicated—nay, it developed with restraint; and a fatal outrage, when she was detected on the table-cloth after lunch, in the act of trying to get a convenient hold of a limbless fowl, preparatory to carrying it away, caused a council to be held at once in reference to her case. It was resolved, after a secret deliberation—our opinion had not then much weight in the councils of the house—to get rid of Vixen the First: not, I am happy to say, by execution or other violent measures, but by conferring her as a gift on a gentleman in the country, who fortunately had a taste for "varmint"—in the sense of what is Bohemian in the matter of sport—and for this reason was willing to overlook those cutaneous blemishes. But though unlike the leopard, she might change her spots, she could not overcome her old appetites, whetted by sharp country air and pastimes; and we were soon grieved to learn that the amateur of "varmint" had found himself constrained to part with his useful assistant. More than two years later, at a sea-side place, a decayed-looking "cur" came creeping across the street from the heels of a Sykes-looking fellow, and looked up to me with wistful recognition, as though half afraid that such acknowledgment would take the shape of the prompt and sharp kick. There was something very piteous in this cringing self-depreciation. The dog, too, was thin and bony, and the tail, once carried so jauntily, as a knowing fellow wears his hat, was now gathered up timorously under the legs. Suddenly Sykes gave a whistle and a sharp curse, and the luckless animal slunk off. That was the last I saw of Vixen the First.

A year or so later some one brings to the house a little diminutive Sky terrier, coal black, rough-haired, not uncomely, and about two hands long. This gentleman is known as "Jack." Being a lady's property, he is forthwith pampered, and made free of drawing-rooms and bedrooms: which I feel acutely as a retrospective injustice to the memory of the lost Vixen the First.

Jack was, I suppose, the most delightful instance of real, natural, undisguised *selfishness* that could be conceived. Loaded with benefits, stuffed with delicacies, he made not the slightest pretence of caring for the persons who so favoured him. In justice to him, it must be admitted that he never attempted to bite them; but after his meal, or indeed at any season, when he was stretched at length on his rug, any endearments from even the privileged hand of his mistress, were resented with testy growlings and ill-humoured movings away. The only one for whom he had toleration or the faint appearance of regard was a person of low degree, an old retainer of the family, who kept a little whip privately for his special behoof, and who used to hold conversations with him through the pantry-window. "I'll give you the whip, sir, I will," &c. To this official, I am proud to say for the sake of our common animal nature, he was almost fawning in his behaviour, making affectation of being overjoyed to see him, and when the retainer would return, after an absence of a week, going—artful hypocrite—into convulsions of whinings, jumpings, and such pretences of delight. His mistress has been away a month, and he has been known to trot up the kitchen stairs to see what the commotion of her return might be about, stand at a distance, look on at the new arrival, then coolly turn his back, and strut leisurely down again, as though the matter was unworthy his attention. Yet it was almost impossible not to feel an interest in him, for this very indifference or independence. And he had his good points also. He was a perfect gentleman; seemed always to recollect his good birth and breeding, and no persuasions of servants could retain him below in their kitchen quietly, save in very cold weather, when he had his reasons for engaging the great fire there. He was always intriguing to slip away from servants. But, faithful to his principles, he knew their dinner hour to the moment, and no seductions of high society would then prevent his going down to join them at that desirable time. Sometimes if detained above by stratagem, he would at last escape, and would come galloping in among them, panting, with an air, as though he were conferring a favour, and as who should say, "I was unavoidably detained, but I have since tried hard to make up for lost time."

He had likewise learned little tricks of begging round the table for food—a practice a little humiliating for a gentleman of his birth, but still consistent with his principles. For, if invited "to beg" where food was not concerned, he would resent it, and if importuned, would growl. During meal-time he certainly gave his mistress the preference, going on short excursions to any one who invited him with any conspicuous morsel, but returning to her side. If, however, she said, "No more, sir," and showed him the palms of her hands, he at once turned away from her, with unconcealed contempt, taking up his residence with some more promising person. No bare endearments could in the least detain him. Another merit of his was rare personal courage. He was afraid of no one, man, woman, child, or dog. For so tiny a creature this was really to be admired. Attack him with a stick or

umbrella, and he would stand on his defence, with his face honourably towards you, growling, snarling, and even *mewling* with rage, and all the time retiring cleverly and slowly until he got to shelter.

In the streets he trotted along with infinite dignity, and towards other dogs bore himself with a haughty contempt. Nothing was more amusing than to see a big, frisking, free-mannered dog run at him and coolly tumble him over in the dust, and to see the little outraged gentleman pick himself up, all over dust, growling and snarling with rage and mortification. More amusing still was it to see a great Newfoundland dog stalk up, not quite sure whether this could be a rat, or one of his own species, whom he was bound to respect. As he became importunate in his curiosity, and troublesome in his half friendly, half hostile attention, it was delicious to see Jack turn and snap deliberately at him, sputtering rage, while the giant would start back confounded, not knowing what to make of it.

Seven, eight, nine years roll by, and he is actually getting to be a little old gentleman. He wheezes and coughs a good deal as he goes up-stairs. His black eyes are not so brilliant as of yore. But he has become snappish and impatient, more testy and selfish than ever. He is, in fact, just like other old gentlemen. His appetite is just as great, and he *will* eat hearty meals, which, however, do not agree with him; and though he is usually unwell after these hearty banquets, the lesson is quite thrown away on him. His fine black whiskers have turned grey and rusty. In the house, too, changes have taken place. He has lost friends, and it grieves me to think that in these old days of his he found a change, and learnt what the world was. I wonder did he make a sort of Wolsey reflection on the world, when, with much wheezing and coughing, he had toiled up-stairs, and coming confidently in at the drawing-room would be met with a stern "Go down, sir!—go down!" But what could one do for him? He was not the young buck he used to be, and he had, besides, an affection of the hinder leg, something in the nature of slight paralytic stroke, brought on by excess at table.

Another wiry yellow dog arrives on the scene, carried in the arms of a Jewish-looking gentleman, in a squirrel cap, whose profession is dogs—with so gentle and amiable an air about her, and with such a resemblance to my old favourite, that I at once redeem her from captivity for the sum of fifteen shillings, and christen her "Vixen the Second."

She was the strangest combination in physique; with the yellow wiry-haired body of the ordinary terrier, she had the snout of the bull terrier, perfectly coal black, and the brightest and largest of black eyes set darting forward like dark carbuncles. With this truculent and remarkable exterior she showed herself the most engaging and gentle creature. Children shrank from her as she jogged by with the true bull dog, wary, business-like air. But she did not want for pluck or courage, as every street boy knew—a class whom she regarded with detestation. Half a mile away, the sight of a pair of bare legs, a cap, and a torn jacket, threw her into a fury: down went her head and ears, and she was off like an arrow, and presently flying round the bare legs. Beggar boys, boys with baskets, all sorts of boys, had the same effect: low men with a generally blackguard look fell under the same odium. I am inclined to believe that in a previous state of life she had suffered persecution from beings of this sort. She was up to anything in the way of sport or gamesomeness, and if pursued by any rough, at whose heels she had been flying, would retreat under a cart, and there stand snarling and spitting horribly. Sometimes correction became necessary, and then she would take her corporal punishment with eyes closed fast, shrinking away from it, and crouching, but with true Spartan fortitude, never uttering even a yelp. Her intelligence was surprising. If her master assumed an expression of displeasure, she grew disturbed and uneasy. And here was a favourite exercise to show off her sagacity. When he was reading and she half snoozing with her chin on her forepaws, he would say in a low quiet voice of displeasure, "What made you do it? What dy'e mean?" Her motion would be to raise her head and look round in a mournfully deprecating way, as who should say, "What is it, master?" If the reproach were repeated, she would look again with her great sad eyes, the tail pleading slowly, and finally raising herself in the most deprecating way, would steal over, and with a sort of groan, would raise herself on her hind legs and piteously implore forgiveness. The moment she saw a smile, her tail wagged joyfully.

She had the sweetest disposition, this Vixen the Second. She had even taught herself, God knows how, a sort of moral restraint and discipline. She had her rule of life, based upon what she thought would be pleasing to the Great Being, so he seemed to her, that guided her existence. Take an instance. We all know those harmless salutations and flirtations interchanged among those of her race, who are perfect strangers to each other, and which appear almost an etiquette. No one had so keen a zest for these interviews as Vixen. Her remarkable air, a little bizarre, but highly attractive, drew crowds of admirers around her. Yet when they came with their insidious homage, she would indeed stop, for she knew what was due to the courtesies; she would, for a second be dazzled; but in another moment the moral principle had asserted itself, and with a secret agony—for the struggle cost her much, she was dog after all—she tore herself away, and came rushing to make up for even that second's dalliance. On one occasion only did her resolution fail her, and that was when a matchless bull-terrier of a dazzling snow-white, and an

exquisite shape, breed, and symmetry, made some advances. He was dressed in the height of the mode, richly, with a collar decorated around with silver and most musical bells. This captivating creature was too much for her; she was deaf to all angry calls—threats even—seemed determined to pursue this fascinating acquaintance, and prepared to give up all and follow him. But this was a brief intoxication, the old, old story, all for love, and the world well lost. She was observed to be quiet and pensive all that day, and when she went out again, looked about restlessly for the brilliant white admirer: *he*, of course, had long since forgotten the incident, and was busy enslaving some other charmer.

For Vixen the Second, the kitchen had not that charm which it has for other dogs. Neither had she that liking for ostlers, footmen, &c., which her kind usually entertain. She was always scheming to get up-stairs; below, her ears were always strained for the far-off whistle; indeed, her organisation was so delicate, and her affection so strong, that she knew the peculiar sound of her master's step as the hall-door opened and he entered. After breakfast every morning there was heard a faint "pat-pat" on the oilcloth in the hall, drawing nearer. Those who watched her found that this was her favourite *secret* gait, with which she contrived to make escape from below when they wished to detain her, thus passing the pantry-door on tiptoe. Sitting at his study-table, her master would see her moving inward mysteriously, and presently a wistful nose, and a pair of more wistful eyes were introduced, softly looking round the edge, and saying as plain as nose and eyes could say, "Do let me come in, please." She would stay in that position until the solicited invitation was given, then enter on her favourite gait, receive congratulations, and proceed to take her favourite turning round and round before coiling herself properly. Often, with a heavy sigh, she would let herself drop full length upon her side and lie out lazily. This was all sheer coquetry, for she could have entered boldly and in the usual way of her kind. The only exception was after washing day, below: a terrible ceremony, which she shrank from. When she saw the large tub brought out, she skulked under the table with signs of horror and repulsion; then, in the first unguarded moment, disappeared into some strange and ingenious place of concealment, which for a long time defied the strictest search. After this washing operation was happily over, she would come bursting in abruptly, her wiry hair standing on end through imperfect drying, and would go prancing about, snuffling and coughing, evidently thrown off her centre by the operation. It was the soap, I think, which affected her, through the smell of the alkali employed. It was no craven shrinking from the water, for she swam bravely; and on the coldest days, when curs were cowering away from the water's edge, she would plunge in boldly to fetch out sticks, evidently in obedience to her high sense of duty, though trembling with cold, and much buffeted by the rough waves.

Jack, yet alive, shared in all our excursions, and shared Vixen the Second's kennel. At last, however, the time came when these pleasant relations were to be broken up for ever. Old Jack began to fail, yet gradually. When the cheerful cry for going abroad reached him, he would rise, walk a short way eagerly, then recollect himself, as it were, and go back. He prefered his easy-chair by the fire. He grew more cross every day, or rather hour. He found the temperature of his own private house in the yard too severe, and used actually to simulate exhaustion, to get taken in and be laid before the kitchen fire, and treated with tenderness and interest by female hands. He would bask in that agreeable atmosphere, lying with an almost comic languor, apparently without sense or motion, save when any one touched him as if to remove him, when he would forget his part, and emit a low cantankerous growl. Seeing the success of this manœuvre, he often resorted to it, until the public at last refused to be so imposed on, and rather neglected his touching symptoms. This only made him more peevish and disagreeable. A more genuine symptom was the small size to which he was shrinking: growing smaller every hour; originally a little dog, he had become now of a very tiny pattern—his rich black coat had grown rusty, and his dark face and muzzle had turned an iron grey. In these later days he took refuge in a sort of indifference, which had the air of a wounded reserve. He kept himself to himself, as it were. Invited in, he did not seem to care to accept civilities. The paralytic affection seemed to gain on him, arching his back rather, and drawing up his hinder leg. Poor Jack!

One winter evening set in more than usually severe—frosty, with a bitter wind. Events of some importance had been going forward in the mansion, and throughout the day, beyond the customary invitation to come and take his breakfast, not much notice had been bestowed on him. Later, at a less engrossing period, a faithful maid, perhaps feeling compunction, went to look after him and bring him in. He was discovered, his meal, untouched, lying near him, cold and collapsed, and with scarcely any sign of life. He was carried in tenderly, and carefully laid down on the warm hearth, and rubbed carefully and assiduously. The sight of his loved kitchen fire, and its genial warmth—the sun to which this little canine Parsee always turned his face with something like idolatry—seemed to draw him back to life. His eyes opened languidly, his little shrunken body glowed anew. But as he made an effort to get nearer to the fire, the head dropped over quietly, and the hinder leg gave a little twitch. Life had ebbed away very gently. A simple basket, containing his poor old remains, was carried unostentatiously to a neighbouring square, where a friendly gardener, who had often noted him taking his easy morning constitutional over the pleasant sward, undertook the sexton's duty,

and performed the last decent offices in a pretty flower bed. Vixen the Second attended as mourner, but behaved with something like levity, and yet, at the same time, exhibiting an uneasy curiosity about the basket; otherwise she showed no concern.

If Vixen had a penchant it was for butchers' shops: which she discovered afar off, and to which, if we were on the other side of the street, she crossed over, in a most circuitous and artful fashion, and with a guilty creeping way, quite foreign to her. She never stood irresolute in front of the entrance, sniffing from a distance, as some foolish dogs do, who are repulsed with a kick. She entered privately under the counter, crept round leisurely, and invariably secured some choice "swag." Indeed, some of her robberies were too daring, as on the day we visited the confectioner's shop together, when she partook of various delicacies, yet lingered behind on some pretext. She was presently seen to emerge at full speed from the confectioner's door, carrying with infinite difficulty a large bath bun in her jaws, the confectioner himself in angry pursuit. How she got possession of this delicacy could not be ascertained; he said, "it were when his back was turned," an affront he seemed to feel. He was, of course, indemnified, and the daring shoplifter was foolishly allowed to retain the property, eating it in pieces of convenient size. When taken to sit for her portrait, she imparted a dramatic element into that operation. The thorough investigation she made; the sniffing at the chemicals; the speculation as to the apparatus, camera, &c., which seemed to have some suspicious connexion with fire arms; the searching behind the theatrical draperies; but when business came, her sense of duty at once asserted itself, and the operator owned that he had found his human sitters more difficult to "pose" and far more affected. She arrayed herself on the cushion placed for her, and gazed with her bright eyes intently on a bit of biscuit held out ostentatiously behind the camera. There was a gentle motion in her tail, but this I firmly believe she was not conscious of, or she would have suppressed it. The result was surprising—I am looking at it now—sharp, clear, unblurred, and life-like.

The relations of dog and boy are always of a lively sort. I do not speak of the ill conditioned boy, who torments his dog, throws stones at him, half drowns him in water, ties a tin kettle to the tail. Such I should like to see hunted hard over the country, with all the honest dogs of the parish at his heels. But the good manly boy finds a friend and companion in his dog, a sympathiser and friend, who is always glad to see, or to go with, him. The hotter, the more dusty the day, the longer the country road, the more welcome to Vixen the Second. Once the great green park was reached, with its eddying hills, its delightful slopes and swards, under the thorns, then supremest felicity set in; the race, the eating of grass, the tossing of the head, the fresh scamper, the drinking at the clear brook side, the book drawn out on the soft bank, with reader and book reflected in the brightest and most flashing of mirrors, while Vixen the Second is away on short explorings. Now a whirr from the root of the old tree that stoops over the water, and the restless investigator has made out a nest, now a sudden plash and yelp of disappointment, and the nose is pointed quivering, as a great water rat leaps in, evicted from his lodgings.

Sometimes the journey would be enlivened by incidents of broad farce. She was not without a sense of the higher grotesque. We once met a strange wiry old maid in a limp skirt, a little short cape, a "poke" bonnet of the day of George the Fourth, and a long spiky parasol. This lady arose suddenly from a bench where she had been reading in a pastoral way; the effect on Vixen was a humorous one; she gave a start and a short grunt, jumping from this side to that, and looking back at me, as who should say, "What sort of Yahoo have we here?" She quite divined the harmless character of the apparition, but saw it was abnormal, and accordingly contented herself with short barks; then took a short wheel in front of the apparition, and lay down with her nose to the ground, like an Indian skirmisher with a musket pointed.

Or, one might come suddenly on a stray party of boys with a donkey. One of the happiest and most satisfactory moments conceivable for the gamin mind. There would be a tall fellow or two, who equally relished their share of the donkey, though scarcely to be ranked in the category of boys; one of whom, by superior force, was presently mounted, his feet almost touching the ground, and then the whole cortége set off in exquisite delight, the tall youth riding stiffly and warily, as the donkey had its ears suspiciously straight and a queer look on its mouth. Off they set full speed, voices chattering and screaming with delight, the dust in clouds, hoofs pattering, and a whole rain of pokes, thumps, pushes, pinches! Comic, and so it seems to Vixen, who, in a second, has her ears down, stoops, and is off at full speed. She gives low shrieks of enjoyment, and as the clouds of dust clear, she is seen keeping up with the party, attaching herself to the heels of the donkey, giving him every now and again a short sharp bite. In a moment the donkey's back shoots up in the air, and Vixen is rolling over in the dust, and left behind; in a second moment she is up again, shrieking and yelping with enjoyment, and again has her sly bite below, but is more cautious in avoiding the return stroke. Up goes the back again, and suddenly there is a great scramble, and abrupt stillness, with a cloud of dust rising slowly. As it clears away afar off, I am toiling on behind. I see that the last uprising of the back (stimulated by Vixen) has been successful—that the lazy boy has been shot over the donkey's head—that one of his infantine aides has been upset in the confusion—that

the donkey has been down himself as far as his knees, but is now standing like a stock or a rock in the centre of the disaster.

This faithful friend, and those who admired and respected her, were soon to be parted. It has been mentioned that she was of a delicate, finely strung nature, susceptible in the highest degree; skilful acquaintances remarking the curious prominence and lustre of her wonderful eyes, prophesied in a highly encouraging way, "I shouldn't be at all surprised if that dog went mad one of these days." This had the air of a special revelation; but who is surprised at *any* dog going mad one of these days? We treated the prophecy with contempt. It came to pass that the family had to go and travel, and Vixen the Second was left behind, according to the newspaper phrase, "during a protracted sojourn." Special instructions were left that she should enjoy every luxury of diet, walkings, &c.; but as was learned on return, nothing could a charm impart. Whether the matron in whose charge she was left, performed her trust conscientiously, it is not for me to say; her own rapturous declaration, that "if ever there was an 'appy dog on this world's earth, it were her," seemed to be confuted by Vixen the Second's silent protest, and cowering away as the matron made advances. I had more reliance on that simple assurance of the honest creature who had never deceived, than on the matronly Gamp's volubility. Vixen was in a tumult of joy to welcome us, and executed many strange and characteristic dances in testimony of her joy; but otherwise she had grown dull and dejected. The matron (I heard later) had been fond of giving tea parties, having a large circle of friends, and was therefore inclined to "drat" that ere dog, or any thing that interfered with her social pleasures. She had never treated Vixen the Second to any delicious country walks, or green fields. However, we would now resume them on the old scale.

We went out "to shop" that very day, and, entering a bookseller's, Vixen went off as usual to explore corners behind the book boxes, unearth bits of india-rubber lying in corners, and keep her nose in practice by finding traces of rats or cats. The shopman comes mysteriously, and says:

"Why I think, sir, your dog is ill."

I follow him into a most seductive place, tremendously suggestive of rats, and there see poor Vixen the Second rolling contorted on the ground in a fit. *Think* she was ill!

It was a long struggle; but the faithful creature, when encouraged and called to, made a wild effort to raise herself on her convulsed hinder legs, as she was accustomed to do to receive friendly approbation, but instantly fell back and rolled upon the ground. She got over it—walked home a little wild and confused, but still walked home. Next day we set off on a long, long walk, the first of the series, which should gradually restore her lusty health. It was a fine fresh day, and we took a long stretch of miles along a sort of pier. Vixen was not full of alacrity—was rather heavy, with a curious suspiciousness in her manner, halting every now and again, and looking about her as if she expected danger. Still she exerted herself on every invitation to investigate holes for rats, &c., but her heart was not in the work. It was mere complaisance—the old wish to oblige and be agreeable. We walked until evening, then we turned. A butcher's boy passed, though without his insignia, but she knew him—the old instinct—and I own it was not with displeasure that I saw the sharp wiry ears go down, and Vixen make at his legs. He was some way in front, and she had some distance to rush. To my surprise, she quite passed her old enemy, pursuing her course as if, to use the butcher's expression, "a thousand devils were at her tail." The yellow figure grew smaller in the distance. I jumped on a wall and saw it growing yet smaller—still going on at the same frantic pace. Now she was a faint yellow speck; now she was a mile away, now out of sight. I never saw her again. A tragic exit—as it were rushing away into space.

A fishing village was between me and my home, where there was an idle, noisy, ne'er-do-well throng, ripe for any baiting or any mischief. I asked for her here, but they had seen nothing. Yet there was an odd manner about those desperados, as I recollected afterwards. When I got home, no Vixen's wiry head was put out of the study-door. Perhaps the poor honest creature had met a cruel end among these ruffians; perhaps she had felt her megrims coming on, and from the pain had rushed away, and these fellows had raised the cry of "Mad dog!" and had hunted the gentle creature to death. I have another theory, quite consistent with her gentle temper, that she felt madness coming on her, and rushed off thus into the void and into space, severing all ties, in preference to doing involuntary injury to those she loved. But I have no warrant for this theory.

DURHAM DEEDS.

I HAVE a dim recollection of a portrait supposed to represent his Royal Highness the Duke of York, as Bishop of Osnaburg. They had sent me down—a weakling child—to a country farmhouse to live or die, whichever my destiny might be. Opposite the ingle nook glared the duke bishop in flowing canonicals, a mitre on his head, red with jewels of gigantic size, and a crozier in his right hand. But he wore jack-boots with tremendous spurs, was girded with a sword, and his buccaneer belt was stuck full of pistols. On his left, rose a village church out of a quiet grave-yard; on his right, a village in flames, women and children flying in despair, and dragoons charging fiercely down upon them. I wondered, child as I was, whether all bishops were princes, and whether

the grave old prelate, who once preached so mildly to the farmers, commanded a regiment of dragoons.

Osnaburg, they told me, was somewhere in Germany, and things were different there. But I have since found that even in England bishops were formidable potentates in the good old times. The Bishops of Durham were palatines as well as prelates, and if they preached the blessing of mercy ex cathedrâ, they not unfrequently gave short shrift and summary execution to petty wrongdoers whose guilt in these degenerate days would be expiated by a week's imprisonment. No doubt many a shivering criminal was affectionately consigned to the episcopal scaffold. A Bishop of Durham was then the undisputed master of a small kingdom, but the despotic power of more extensive monarchies was concentrated in his person. The bishop coined money at his own mint, levied taxes for his own behoof, raised troopers for the defence of his own realm or the maintenance of his own power. He named his ermined judges of assize, of Oyer and Terminer, of gaol delivery, and of the peace. He could, if he pleased, pardon all intrusions, trespasses, felonies, outrages on women, and misprisions of treason. He took, for his own perquisites, all fines for alienations, amercements, forfeited recognizances, post fines, and bishop's silver. He granted licences to feudal lords to crenolate and embattle castles—a privilege not appreciated by the miserable serfs around. The bishops were lords admiral of the seas and waters within the palatinate. They "enjoyed"—that is the term—all wrecks of the sea, royal fish, anchorage, wharfage, metage, and forfeitures. They were partial to game and venison, and therefore held in their own right forests, woods, and chases, with courts to decide summarily all questions incident to venerie. They appointed all the authorities of the palatinate, and these held office only "during the bishop's pleasure," or for his life. They held courts of justice, and named the judges, and these courts embraced a Chancery, an Exchequer, a court of Common Pleas, and a county court, with full authority and severe sanctions.

O the good old times! And O the dear old days! And O the preaching parrots! And what a loss we have had of it! (This by way of parenthesis.)

When so many courts, jurisdictions, privileges and prerogatives existed, and when wars between the Scots and borderers led to numerous transfers of property, an immense mass of documents necessarily accumulated. These documents when they do not directly relate to, indirectly illustrate, the history, antiquities, public and private life, customs, rights, properties, crimes, and punishments of the palatinates of old. The collection if complete would now be of immense extent, but evil fortune befell it from the first. It is said that the precious manuscripts from which the Complutensian edition of the New Testament was printed were subsequently used up in the manufacture of cases for sky-rockets. With equal recklessness and no less criminality, the records of the palatinate were applied to stop up holes made by rats and mice, to kindle fires, and even make bonfires in times of public festival. Barrows full, it is in evidence, were kicked about the palace green, under the bishop's nose. Little boys of the episcopal city made kites of them, and for many a day the cooks of Durham never wanted a bundle of deeds wherewith to singe a goose. No "class" of documents can now be formed, of a date anterior to the Pontificate of Antony Bek, who governed from 1280 to 1311, though occasionally in turning over a heap of manuscripts, a stray parchment is found of earlier date, proving that a series did once exist. The executors of Cosins, Bishop and Palatine made short work of a vast quantity of records. They feared—provident and careful men—lest in succeeding generations troublesome questions might arise concerning the titles to the estates which the bishop had continued to amass: so to obviate this inconvenience, they deliberately burned eight chests full of the ancient muniments of the see! In 1647 the Scots swept into Durham, and in the language of the historian, "made havoc of the bishoprick and violated all its rights." One Captain Brewer, with a company of troopers at his heels, threw from the windows all "the records, books, papers, and muniments he could find, and broke up the presses which contained them, for firewood." Prior to this invasion, a "great deal box" full of charters and evidences, amongst which was "that noted and famous record," the Liber Ruber or Red Book of Durham was brought to the house of one George Neusam of York city, without letter or direction. Given by him to one Richard Harrison, the box and its contents were never heard of more. So late as 1854, when an Act of Parliament placed the records of the palatinate under the charge of the Master of the Rolls, it was found that all the records of the Durham county courts had disappeared, and not a fragment remained to tell of their nature or their value.

More than four hundred years ago, Bishop Neville raised a "goodly stone building" for the reception of the palatinate records. Here they were deposited, but not safely, as the woful destruction of the records proves. The authorities of the university of Durham wished to acquire Bishop Neville's structure for the purpose of a library, and the queen transferred to them her rights in the building on condition that they should provide a sufficient edifice elsewhere to supply its place. In the autumn of 1854, before the removal of the records to the new building, they were inspected by Mr. J. Duffus Hardy, who reported on their general condition. He found most of the records "in a lamentable state." The several officers having charge of them were incompetent to read them or afford any assistance to legal or literary inquirers. One of the officers, a man seventy years of age, had been appointed to his post when eighteen months old! There were no

inventories, calendars, or indexes, throughout the several offices, and the condition of the whole mass of documents was disgraceful. Mr. Hardy recommended that the documents in each repository belonging to the crown should be sorted into classes and catalogued, before their removal to the new building constructed for their reception. Durham is the seat of a university; its bishopric was one of the richest in England; the county gentry are affluent, and proud of their ancient lineage. They were supposed to be interested in the preservation and accessibility of the public records. Mr. Hardy naturally thought his suggestions would be adopted. He returned to London, heard that the records had been transferred to the new building, and then for several years the officials were untroubled by inquiries.

The records, however, might have been allowed to continue, as the deputy-keeper of the rolls states, "in their present disgusting state of decomposition and filth until they had been entirely destroyed," but for an accident. Mr. Scott F. Surtees, on an important trial, had occasion to consult the Registry and Record Offices at Durham. One document, very important to his case, could not be found, and it was not until Mr. Surtees had secured the services of Mr. Langstaffe, "the only person who knew anything about the Durham records"—at an expense of five pounds—that the document was forthcoming. Mr. Surtees added to his statement that the state of the Registry and Record Offices at Durham is a disgrace to the age in which we live; and, addressing the Master of the Rolls, expressed a hope "that for the benefit of those who are interested in the history of the north Humber principality, these valuable papers might be more accessible to the historian and the archæologist."

Mr. Surtees' letter was dated in June 'Sixty-seven, and on the first of October, Mr. Duffus Hardy again proceeded to examine the condition of the records in the episcopal and university city. Thirteen years before, he had reported that "the records in the office of the clerk of the peace are in a lamentable state of disorder. Papers, books, and parchments are littered about the floor more than knee deep, some strewn upon tables, chairs, and window-seats; others huddled together on shelves and in cupboards." He had to state, after his last visit, that "their present state of neglect is, if possible, worse than it was thirteen years ago, when that report was made. The documents have the appearance of having been pitched into the rooms with a fork because they were found too filthy to be handled." The present clerk of the peace has frequently called the attention of the justices of the peace for the county of Durham to the discreditable state of the office, "but no attention has been paid to Mr. Watson's remonstrances."

The records of the county palatine of Lancaster having been found in a condition somewhat resembling that of the records of Durham, were transferred to London, where they are admirably kept and accessible to all. The records of Chester, similarly circumstanced, have been arranged, repaired, and the greater portion of them brought under public knowledge by a printed calendar. The Master of the Rolls proposed either that the Durham records should be transferred to London, or that the people of Durham should secure the services of a competent keeper and a clerk to aid him, at the expense of about seven hundred pounds a year. The justices of the peace and many of the gentry object to the transfer of their ancient muniments to London.

Nevertheless they will not pay for their keep. The interest of these papers is almost wholly local. They are not to be confounded with the ecclesiastical documents belonging to the bishopric, or with the valuable illustrations of our early history and literature which are carefully preserved in the cathedral. They are records of proceedings in which the bishop was concerned of old time as a secular prince of Durham, of great local value, but on the whole, probably of slight national importance. But, according to an Act of Parliament providing for such cases, they will have to be brought to London because Durham declines to pay for the due custody of its own papers.

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AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A SMALL BOY.

IN FIVE CHAPTERS. I. THE HOUSE ARAB.

FROM an early period, on occasions of detected felony, the frequent larceny, burglary, or riot, it was customary to accompany the fore-ordained punishment—always given "for my good"—with an awful prophecy. It referred to those premature endings which the law allots, with circumstances of great solemnity and superfluous publicity, as set out in the public papers. This was so rung in my ears, as the president of the court martial proceeded to pass sentence, that I began to consider it as a certain DOOM, directly and disgracefully ending the prospects of a long life, and which only some frantic exertion could avert.

The first occasion on which the prophecy was uttered was, I recollect, on the introduction into the family of a drummer, who had been bought at a bazaar by a beneficent patron, and conveyed, as it were, to trustees, for the joint use of myself and sister. The drummer literally blazed with vermilion, and, varnished, stood on a sort of hollow chamber, whence, on the turning of a feeble wire winch, issued a sort of plucking twang, somehow associated with quills. At the same instant his arms rose and fell in unequal jerks and spasms. Amid the universal jubilation which welcomed this officer—and he was as cordially received on the female side as though he were alive and wore "real scarlet uniform"—it was noticed that I remained silent, and unmoved—discontented, it was assumed, at being fettered by a co-trustee. There was some truth in this theory, but already I had perceived the logical discrepancy between the interior quill music and the outer tympanitic motion, which, as a result, did not fairly correspond. This, it seems to me now, should have occurred to more practical minds than mine. I also *did* resent the co-partnery. What had *she*—a girl—to do with drummers—dans ce galère? Within half an hour from the arrival of the musician—the donor being loaded with honours, that is, receiving sherry above in the drawing-room—the drummer was in my own lair, lying on his side, completely separated from the musical chamber, on which were still visible his footprints in glue. The chamber itself had been laid open, the mystery disclosed, pieces of quills revolving. The wreck was complete and irreparable, when word came that the donees were to attend in the drawing-room in full tenue, bearing their present, and return thanks "to your kind friend, Mr. Bagley," and then this outrage was discovered. The scene may be conceived. Some excuse was made to the generous patron, one, I fear, scarcely consistent with the truth; but he was asked to dinner on the following Sunday, and on his departure a court martial hastily summoned. It was then, before the punishment, that the gallows were first foretold.

Just as people talk now of "the great gold-dust robbery," so now do I bring back "the great jam puff robbery," which is the second important occasion on which it was prophesied that the outraged majesty of the law would be vindicated in my person. The "jam puffs" had been put away in the wing, as it were, of a sideboard. (So it was constructed—a receptacle for teas and groceries to the right and left, while in the space between, lurked, cozily and modestly, a stupendous sarcophagus, or garde de vin.) Some insanity, or self-delusion, had left the wing open, or there had been an apparent locking. Prowling about, some instinct had revealed to me this oversight. Not Aladdin could have been so dazzled; not only the jam puffs, but jam itself, half a dozen pots of marmalade, lump sugar, and other treasures, all revealed. But the puffs were irresistible; I would have been tempted, I fear, into an arrangement about my ultimate spiritual safety, had the arch enemy held in his unseemly paw or claw, one of these delicacies. The flavour of paste and jam combined was too much. I knew well that the delicacies were fore-ordained for a guest that day, a gentleman in orders, for whom they had been selected with care. I recked not. The fit was on me. I swallowed the booty with haste and discomfort, the rich paste flaking off, the jam deliciously emollient. The guilty morsels were gobbled down. I was meditating a second puff, on the desperate plea that, having gone so far, I might go further (the whisperings of conscience were of course stifled), when—— a footstep approaching! A nice ear, sharpened by guerilla and predatory habits, reported it to be the governess. I was at the window in a moment, far away from the violated cupboard. But, alas! I wanted the art of assuming an "unconcerned air," which is de rigueur for a first-class operative. I at the window with a

down, defiant, and suspicious face, disengaged, not breaking anything, destroying no furniture—this was enough at once to fix suspicion. With an habitual instinct, the governess's eyes wandered to the various objects in the room, and seeing mine fixed with a stupid persistence on the sideboard, she flew to it. All was revealed; the missing puff (they had been ordered by her). The case was too serious to be dealt with; the head of the house was called down, the wretched malefactor was examined; the tiny flakes about his lips—the general air of jam—a plumstone found on the carpet, &c., were circumstantial evidence. Then it was, before committal, that the solemn prophecy was again heard.

These two little scenes will help the reader to an idea of the attitude I occupied towards our family. I see myself at this far-off era—I am speaking of the pre-boarding-school time—trudging along the weary and monotonous dunes of childish education: a red-cheeked, bold, insubordinate urchin, a gamin wearing a very green frock, glazed belt and buckle, and over whom there was much periodical shaking of heads, tears, and agonies of responsibility. It was what might be called a purely female household; three sisters, an anxious mother presiding, and an imported governess assisting. The little scene lay in an adjacent country, and the district of this early probation was the outlying portion of a large city, where the more solid metropolitan fabric began to fray off as it were, and open into the still decent suburb. It was the skirt touching the green fields of the country, and yet was strictly town. This amphibious attitude was specially chosen for the grand and absorbing end of "bringing up the children," and promoting their dear health both of mind and body. Streets, sloping down a hill many ways, led off fan-like, to soft green lanes, pleasant country-roads, to the sea itself, and, a more serious business still, to a great park. Our walks came round every day at a fixed hour, with Model Prison-like strictness, being preceded by a rigorous enforcement of uniform. Then, having passed the proper officer, who reported "our being fit to be seen," we were duly marshalled, and with the governess, Miss Simpson, as sergeant of the little force, set forth hand in hand. How I recal the monotony of that road, ever the same—Miller's Mall, it was called—which we paced day after day, strictly in pursuit of health. It was garnished with ditches on each side, richly stocked with "pinkeens" and other noble fish, while frogs and sticklebacks abounded. I could have stopped the whole day engaged in the fascinating and absorbing sport. But this would have been a pastime the "low boys" of the district followed. Was I not being correctly brought up "as a gentleman?" and the sergeant had her instructions accordingly. When I looked to the green field or common on one side of the road, and saw the juvenile commons or plebs of the district engaged uproariously in hunting the wild cat, which, driven by cruelties from town life and town roofs and tiles, had become savage; or when I heard the roar and cheerful quarrel arising from the game of "hurling;" I would have entered into an arrangement on the spot with any capable magician who would have secured me a like enjoyment. No one can conceive the force of my hungering and thirsting after rustic sports, the cheap joys of nature; going out for the day with contemporaries, getting thoroughly dirty and hot all over, residing in ditches and bogs, firing brass ordnance of a calibre nearly that of a magnum bonum pen, and, above all, the proprietorship of a knowing terrier with a love for sport. None of these things were allowed to me. I was looked on as a sort of street Arab, one of the tares of bad tastes and inclinations, which female hands were always busily plucking up. I have no doubt a good deal of promising young wheat was unintentionally grubbed up in the process. This, I believe, was principally owing, to the baleful influence of an old friend—and an elderly friend, too—of the family, a retired clergyman, Mr. Bickers, who had known our parent in a former and happier state; a sour dry curmudgeon, but who possessed the most extraordinary influence over her, which in angry moments I was inclined to attribute to alliance with evil spirits. This man, always coming to give advice, and sitting for hours, during which time he accepted sherry wine and cake profusely, had taken a dislike to me, simply because he knew I had sounded the depths of his infamy. Rare but splendid banquets were given in his honour, when he would graciously "fix his own day," and name a friend or two whom he would like to meet. Sometimes he would have a banquet given to welcome one of his own personal familiars, whom he wished thus inexpensively to compliment. These awful festivities left their mark on the establishment, and cast their shadow, not only for weeks after, but for a fortnight before, when the house resounded with the din of preparation. The now-recording Pariah, indeed, looked forward to them with something of the zest with which the brigand expects the coming diligence, for during the banquet he was known to prowl, escaping the sentries placed to watch him, and intercept the *descending* delicacies.

Mr. Bickers's hostility could be more immediately traced to one particular overt act.

When it was known that Mr. Bickers had arrived below, and the usual express had come to Miss Simpson to hurry her little force into full uniform and send them down, it was curious to observe how differently the news affected us. The young ladies—already incipient coquettes—got on their frocks with alacrity, and offered their tiny heads to the rough brush, and their soft hair to be tied up with showy ribbons by the Mary or Jane then in office. To them this going down to company was a welcome treat. They scented the campaigns of later years from afar. At that time they reckoned but nine or ten years. But the present Pariah had to be fetched from some den in the roof or purlieu where his lair

was; the spot he dearly loved, where he had his tools, where he made ships, and (more delightful still) daubed his stolen paint, or perhaps (more exquisite enjoyment still) from the disused loft of the stable, to be scaled by a rotten ladder, or yet a higher, more ethereal enjoyment, the coach-house, where the green family chariot lay in state with an almost mayoral state. I pause to describe these joys.

Entrance to this Elysium was effected by an abstracted key; and *then* followed such a pastime! A friend or two being privily admitted —for it was a service of danger—such a throwing open of the chariot-door, flinging down of the steps with hurry, à la laquais—such folding of them up again, presto, with professional speed, banging the door, touching one's hat, and flying up behind into the back seat! the carriage being supposed to be in the act of rattling off. This joy was repeated again and again. I knew nothing that could be set beside it; and with the assistance of a friend, who played the part of owner, and rode luxuriously inside, and gave directions to "Drive to Thirteen, Rufus-square, east side," it became almost dramatic. But it was infinitely, *awfully*, perilous. The danger of detection was extreme; and if discovery followed, it was believed that a punishment analogous to breaking on the wheel —any how, a punishment too severe for even its shape to enter into our imagination—was reserved for the offender. Once, indeed, when the Footman was in a hurry to climb up behind, when the chariot was supposed to have driven off with more than ordinary speed, his foot slipped, and he "barked" all his shin severely against the edge of the step. His cries—"barking" of another sort—had there been any one at hand, would have betrayed him. But he managed to totter to a place of safety without attracting observation. He was noticed to walk lame, was promptly seized and examined; but tortures could not have wrung his secret from him.

The process of washing the carriage—the wheel twirling round, the mop, the abundance of water gushing and splashing—were even more delightful in their way; but the Pariah's penchant in this direction was well known, and on the day selected for the ablution, the police were on the alert, and observed him narrowly the whole time.

To return to the Rev. Mr. Bickers. Fetched from his lair then, with streaks on his face, the green frock all dirty—("Your *best* frock, too, sir!")—his mouth already swelling into a surly pout, later to take the habitual expression of sulk, the Pariah was made to dress. His face was duly burnished by Mary Jane, on the truly venomous principle, as it were, which, when the subject is repugnant, takes the shape of upward scrubbing, the pressure coming chiefly on the nostrils. The frock is cleaned in a storm of severe reproaches—("You ought to be ashamed of yourself, sir!")—and then the "best belt" is found to be out of order, the "beautiful new brass buckle" all wrenched and broken. The delay is so long that the head of the house, a severe matron, comes up in person, justly suspecting that something is wrong.

Punishment for the violated buckle was adjourned; time pressed, and Mr. Bickers was waiting. I was led down to him by the hand.

"O you wicked creature! Will nothing touch your hardened heart!" was the speech hurriedly addressed to me outside the door; and I recal my amazement at the histrionic power which inside the door could immediately assume a sweet soft smile, saying, "Here, Mr. Bickers, is Sidney come down to see you."

I see *him* now, his red malacca cane stretching out from his knee, and making a sort of camp-stool with his two legs, his hat on the ground beside him, the unfailing sherry—to *me* almost as inappreciable in taste as the manna I used to hear of on Sundays, and thought must have been so delicious to the Israelites. The air was heavy with a close fragrance of cake, rich and plummy. That perfume always brings him up before me. My sisters were sitting round, "like ladies, sir." Their eyes were upon him. He was saying, "Now Miss Lucy, will you tell me where is the Island of Madagascar?" Miss Simpson, this being her department, looking on with pride tinged with a little nervousness. The Pariah, however, instead of walking up with alacrity, "like a gentleman," as usual skulked, terrier-like, to the wall, and there stood, glowing and glowering, his eyes darting fire and suspicion.

"Come over here, sir, to me," says Mr. Bickers, with a severe eye.

The Pariah won't answer. The maternal eye, wistful, agonised almost, is on him. "Oh, Sidney!"

"Come here, sir," Mr. Bickers says sternly.

"I don't want to," the Pariah bursts out, with his thumb in his mouth.

Mr. Bickers had a new Quarterly Review in his hand, which he had brought to read my mother "a fine passage on the liberty of the press." He had been doing this. She would have thought anything he read, fine.

"Bring me over that knife, Sidney."

The police had to interfere, and I recal the instrument being hurriedly forced into my hand, and my being propelled towards him. When close I tried to free myself, and half dropped, half threw away, the odious instrument. Movement fatally misconstrued.

"*O*, sir!" says the Rev. Mr. Bickers, in mixed horror, sorrow, and anger, "for *shame!*"

"O, Sidney, Sidney;" says the parent in agony. "Take him away up-stairs. O, you wicked, wicked boy!"

Pariah hurried out, much as the prisoner just found guilty is huddled down out of the dock.

A council was held. Mr. Bickers gave a great deal of advice. "I had thrown the paper-knife," it seems, *at* him. In one so young, such a bad sign. Not that he minded it, "but for the boy's own sake, my good lady, you must curb those germs with a strong hand.

If he gives way to his passions now, what will he do when he is older and stronger, and has more dangerous weapons in his power?"

So did this artful monster—making the "attempt on his safety" an excuse for fresh and copious applications to sherry—inflame the case against me. That awful day long remained in my memory. There were passionate tears, bursts of weeping, over this profligate wretch. The halter was again dangled before me. A premature and disgraceful end on a public scaffold, was assumed as certain. In the darkness of my cell, I shrank and cowered from the dreadful prospect. The memory of that day's work was always kept green by frequent allusion to the day "when *you threw the knife* at Mr. Bickers." An obviously unfair garbling and inflaming of the whole transaction!

II. JOHN MANBY.

An important member of our household, and a remarkable person in his way, was an elderly sort of major domo—he was scarcely butler—always seen in decent black, and who went by the name of John Manby. Every one knew "John," or soon came to know him, for he had been in the family, according to that indefinite measure of length "man and boy," for some forty or fifty years. He was more like a retired schoolmaster than a domestic, for he always wore a white high neckerchief of the Lord Melbourne or Canning model, a great bunch of gold seals at the end of a flat chain, and a silver watch that was always accurate, and went in surprising conformity with a remote post-office clock. He was proud when an appeal was made to this instrument, though he had to raise it to the surface with infinite pains from the "fob" by a process almost like engineering. His phrase always was, "*A half after two*"—an expression peculiar to himself; or, in a more vague form, "*better* than half-past two." A man much above the common; had seen the world; had made a voyage or two to Buenos Ayres, where he had been offered posts of trust, which he had declined; had lived much in France, and could speak French of a certain sort. This reputation gave him a grave and possessed manner. Sometimes he would relate fragments of his eventful life in a graphic way that was peculiar to him, especially that voyage in the "Bay o' Biskey," when he, with the other passengers, was "lashed" to the mast (he revelled in that nautical word, and would not accept "tied" on any terms)—was lashed to the mast, and "the waves now would mount—ay, 'just for-ty-five thousand times the hoigth of that house there!" Then "away they'd go from *anunder* us, and down *we*'d go just forty-five times the depth of that pillar there." He had curious recollections of Bath, Cheltenham, and fashionable places of that sort, then in the heyday of their reputation, and of exploits of the late Colonel Berkeley, whose failings he evidently regarded with fond extenuation on the score of "the beyewtifullest carriage-and-four you ever saw! the noblest long-tails! and he himself on the box driving, with the two little tigers behind, the creatures!" His French adventures were no less entertaining in the "Shangs Eleesay" and other delightful places of resort. In his sage moments he would air his French. "Wee, meshoo! Allay ongho," and the like. Visitors of that country he received with many bows and courtesies, always complimenting them by addressing them in what he considered their own tongue. "Resty, madame, le sally toot sweet;" at which the amazed foreigners, rather proud of their own broken English, would stare haughtily. Long after, when this retainer attended the family to that bright and sunny land, half professionally, half because he wished for change of scene, as the steamer touched the pier, and the crowd of fisherwomen, whose privilege it is to deal with the luggage, came on board, a stream of old forgotten French poured back on him, and he was seen struggling with these singular creatures, battling for his trunks, and addressing them in spasmodic "Lessy, lessy! Cumsee, cumsa! Wee, wee! Metty toot sweet!" invitations put aside, I fear, as one would the harmless cachinations of a Carribee. At home stranger visitors would be often taken aback by the overpowering cordiality of his greeting. "O, you're welcome fifty thousand times, ma'am, no less. Walk in! 'Tis *them* that will be glad to see you. O, you must step in and rest yourself!" Others who might have known him in some previous state, recalled themselves good naturedly. "Glad to see you looking so well, John. Just the same as ten years ago." "Well may you wear yourself then, and indeed the same can be said of *you*. Indeed, I am glad to see yourself, sir, and well you are looking!" After this mutual and delightful recognition, it was a little mortifying for the guest at the drawing-room to find John returning with a confidential and secret air, as if he was paying a compliment: "*Who shall I say, sir*, for I don't rightly mind me of your name?" Of any hypocrisy in the transaction John was utterly unconscious.

Between him and the governess raged the hostility that was natural. He would be heard amusing himself, taking off what it must be confessed was her rather hyper-cockney accent. Sometimes unpleasant conflicts would take place between them, in which the poor lady's position placed her at a disadvantage. He was admirable in the execution of all his duties, and had the same conscientiousness and pride in having his plate clean and all his things in the most perfect order as a coachman in the condition of his horse. He was always contriving new arrangements, carpentering, nailing, &c., to make things "tidy"—a favourite word of his—and "something like"—his highest commendation. He encouraged the same spirit above stairs, and gave us short and sometimes severe lectures on our disorderly arrangements. This "was scandalous, so it was! Everything rookum-rakum, up and down. Wait until to-morrow, next day, and see how it would be

then! Such a *rocomawolia* as it was! But he gave it up, and the whole kit might go to rookum-rakum—hand or foot; he'd never stir!" Laying the table, he would comment on the length of dress of the young ladies present. "Sweeping the gutter up! O Modyee! Modyee!" (a corruption of the French mon Dieu!). "After that! Really, now, I was ashamed of ye—to see ye born ladies coming along gathering up all the mud in the gutter!"

He strongly objected to what he considered extra professional duties—too much opening of the door; after which he said "his heart was broke, up and down, up and down"—or to being sent out on messages—or, above all, to entertainments. His constitutional antipathy to a dinner-party was so marked, that it was not without trepidation that the news of such a festival being in contemplation could be broken to him. It was usually received without any reply, and with a slow descending the stairs, and perhaps a muttered "Well! after *that*, now!" He went through the performance with restraint, however, for he knew what was owing to himself. But the next day a sound of metallic chinking, maintained all the morning, showed what was in progress. He would then repair up-stairs, and with a mysterious manner pointedly invite Miss Simpson down stairs. He meant to convey that she was his chief enemy, but he wished to have even *her* testimony.

"What is the matter, John?"

"Just come down, miss. It's high time it's all to end—high time!"

Below, on the sideboard, were ranged all the plates, knives, spoons, symmetrically sparkling. He wished everything to be counted, the inventory to be taken as strongly as could be against him. There were the two glasses he broke last year, and *he knew* who spoke about *that*, but no matter now—it was all at an end *now;* and after his *forty-five* years' service, it was a poor thing to be going out on the world, &c. This scene came gradually to be in the usual course, and was expected as regularly as the rising of the sun on the day after each banquet. Mutual concessions and explanations were made, and after a little weeping—for he had the gift of tears—things were happily composed.

Sometimes the Pariah and he had a falling out, and that was a far more serious business. Once he acted the unworthy part of a spy or informer, and words could not pourtray the scorn and loathing with which I looked at him. He seemed to me all over a palpable leprosy—of a moral sort. I considered him outside the pale of society, as one whom all good men might hunt down or kill. One evening I plotted this exquisite vengeance. To the realms below, where were kitchen, pantry, &c., a dark stair led down. The plan was this. I got a large step-ladder, a parlour chair or two, and the plate-warmer, and laid them down sideways at the top of the dark stair as a sort of barricade. The light was beyond the title of dim or religious—it was sheer darkness. I then rang the bell, and waited in ambush. I heard his step; and then came an awful crash—a human form tumbling, the wooden clatter of the chairs and ladder, the jingling of the plate-warmer, and a human voice uttering maledictions mingled with pain. The recognised police were out shopping, but I heard scrambling, as of feet taking two steps at a time, and fled. I had barely time to save myself in the garret, to bolt and barricade the door, when he arrived. Such agility in one of his years was surprising. His threatenings, half intelligible as heard through wood, but acquiring a Pythonic grandeur from their very indistinctness, scared my very soul. He went away at last, but did never betray me.

Indeed, he was to be admired, and unconsciously implanted in me early convictions of the value of a steady rule of life, and the sense of *duty* and of the unconscious weight and value in this world of the *respectable* qualities and steady virtues. I would see him making his way with a facility that seemed to me little short of magical. His surprising powers of access and of easy approach to others was, no doubt, owing to his travels and to his having seen the world. I never shall forget my astonishment on the occasion of some royal visit, when the gaping crowd were gazing with an almost *fetish* admiration at the scarlet postilions' liveries and the mirror-like panels, when he was seen alone, within the charmed circle, in easy conversation with one of the august postilions. From that personage he obtained the most curious information as to there being "forty-five of the beautifullest horses daily maintained in those august stables, and that the head-coachman was in receipt of a thousand a year." Police sergeants and inspectors were invariably courteous to him, and yielded him privileges which they did to no one else. At a ball or rout at some great house he was invariably taken in from the inclemency outside, and entertained in the private snuggery of the steward. If a great ship arrived in harbour, he had been all over her, and had even had a pleasant interview with the captain, who in the most affable way had offered him something out of his locker. This mysterious charm was the secret of his power.

III. MR. BLACKSTONE.

I LOOK out of the study window, and now see Mr. Blackstone, the new tutor, hurrying up the street, his neat frock-coat flying out to the breeze, his two fingers poising the neatest of known umbrellas. A small spare man, smaller chested, with orange-coloured hair, and whiskers that seemed made of cocoa-nut fibre. The neatest, most precise of men, not yet a clergyman, but to be one; full of a strong sense of duty and office and responsibility, and who we knew had supported two elderly and useless sisters by his own overworked brain. So had he laboured on through his college, laboured to his degree, and was labouring to a curacy, always respectable, neat, and scrupulous in his

frock-coats. He had a neat little house in some suburb, where everything was looked after carefully, where "the tuitions" found meat and found drink, and clothes and comforts for himself and for his sisters. Dim notions of this remarkable struggle reached me then, but, I am afraid, were not appreciated with the delicacy and forbearance they deserved. He was one of the enemies, the hostile tribes that were brought to the house, and subsidised to harass me. His weary toil and honest motives were nothing to me. We had many a ferocious encounter. The neatest of men; a penknife always about his person, with which he cut his pencil to the finest and truest point. I always admired, even envied, his dexterity in that, foeman as he was (my own heavier and perhaps clumsy touch invariably broke off the lead at an early stage; I cut away too much). His calligraphy was perfect. There was a little manuscript volume, yclept A Judgment Book, or *his* Judgment Book, divided and subdivided and ruled with surprising neatness. In this a daily "finding" was set down for the several departments: for Greek, the grammar, Thucydides, &c.; for Latin, the grammar and Virgil; for syntax, prosody, &c. In French he was scarcely so strong. In this classical direction we got on tolerably; it was over Euclid and the mathematics that fearful scenes took place. "So you have not written that fourteenth problem as I told you?" No answer, Mr. Blackstone sitting back in his chair, and a pink tone coming into his face. No answer. "You have not done your work?" No answer. "Eh?" Pause; then, in a suddenly loud burst: "What is the meaning of all this, sir—this continued insolence? Ah! ah!"—starting up, and his fist trembling close to my face—"if I had you at a school, sir, I should flog you while I could stand over you. But *I'll* make you speak out before I have done with you." Once, and once only, Mr. Blackstone so far forgot his restraint as to indulge himself with a sound box on my ear. It was on an occasion of great aggravation. But ordinarily he felt himself in the relation of the ecclesiastical tribunals, who, after dealing with any prisoner subject to this authority, would hand him over to the civil power for punishment. "Very well, sir," he would say; "I shall give you the worst mark in my power. You shall have the pleasure of presenting to your family, this evening, bad marks for every one of your tasks. Go on, sir; persevere in this course, and you will grow up a credit indeed."

Later in the day—a little before dinner—it was customary to summon the pupil "to bring the judgment book." And on rare days it was easy to know, by the flow of spirits and universal cheerfulness that reigned through the mansion, that "Sidney had nothing but good marks." As an acknowledgment, and at the same time an encouragement to renewed exertion, wine—two glasses even—was served to the winner of such honours. He was neither modest nor elated unduly, for he knew how precarious was this sunshine. It almost invariably fell out that this "spurt," as it might be called, was followed by an immediate and almost disgraceful relapse; and it was almost a certainty that on the next day the pupil, on being summoned, would present himself and his book, with a well-known sullen and dogged bearing, which, to experienced and anxious observers, betokened the worst.

I see, in connexion with Mr. Blackstone, two young gentlemen whom he attended regularly before he came to me, and from whom to me he proceeded straight—William and Arthur. The coming into human life of those model, well-brought-up, and virtuous youths, was a matter which I a thousand times wished could have been otherwise arranged. Arthur and William were too perfect and too well brought up. Arthur was the elder and taller, though, as for that matter, had there been a fair field, and the domestic police tolerant, I should have handsomely waived my own inferiority in stature. The general thirst for knowledge, and the model behaviour, of these appalling youths, was quoted to me a thousand times. It was now driven into me like a needle, now hurled heavily on my head like a club. Every step of the decorous progress of those two young gentlemen was marked for me as with milestones with agonies of all descriptions, and for them was represented as sure to culminate, not merely in the highest civic honours, as in the instance of the virtuous apprentice, but in wealth, and ermine, and an illustrious alliance; while for *me* there was a life of dishonour, with that discreditable scene at the end to close all. Those odious Arthur and William Goodmans! If "your new green frock, sir," was discovered to be stained, or perhaps torn up the back, while the punishment settled by statute was being inflicted, the victim heard that "Arthur Goodman would cut off his little finger before he would do such a thing!" (the only result from which lesson was, a fiendish desire on my part to officiate as operator). Was I arrested, red-handed, as it were, or rather red-mouthed, stealing away, when the jam-pot had been feloniously broken into, when brought before the magistrate and sentenced, was not the punishment invariably accompanied with the taunt, "It would be long before William Goodman would do so mean and ungentlemanly a thing. He would have let his right hand be cut off," &c., &c.

We used to meet these well brought-up youths of a sudden, on the way to church, they politely walking together arm in arm; our families would join, and they would be invited to fraternise, which *I* did with suspicion and defiance. The Sunday's meal would afterwards be seasoned with odious comparisons, "so gentlemanly, such charming manners! When would I be anything like that? But I was utterly hopeless, nothing would ever be made of *me*."

Nor was Mr. Blackstone behindhand in respect to these boys of accursed virtue. As he sat down, and moved his throat in his snowy

starched collar, and stretched his arms to get his white cuffs well down—clearing the decks, as it were, for action—he would say, looking at me, "When do you mean to lay yourself out to learn anything, for I tell you what, my good friend, if you go on in this way I really don't see what end there is to be." Here of course another veiled allusion to the extreme penalty which was my doom. "I have just come from the Goodmans', and do you know what they both asked me this morning? To begin Optics with them. I give you my honour and word, they did, and I have half promised to begin Optics with them; for such zeal deserves to be encouraged." The feeling in *my* mind as I listened to this extraordinary request was either that they were monsters or that the world was turning upside down. "I wonder," added Mr. Blackstone abstractedly, "will *you* ever think of such a thing?" And he looked at me abstractedly, and then there was a pause. And then he made that "tzut tzut" sound people make when they meet something disappointing; shook his head slowly at me, not from side to side but up and down; and said, mournfully, "Well, give me the prosody."

The day that these prodigious Goodmans asked to be taught Optics was a sort of disastrous Ides of March for me. On that occasion, the first of the month, Mr. Blackstone's honorarium was always delivered to him over wine and cake in the drawing-room, and polite and general conversation always took place in my presence, on the subject of myself. In the face of sherry Mr. Blackstone was forbearing, would hold out rather encouraging hopes, would trust that Sidney would soon see how necessary it was, he should begin to apply himself. "I was just telling him" went on Mr. Blackstone placidly: meaning me no harm, but unconsciously adjusting the rope round my neck: "that Arthur and William Goodman had come to me to beg that I would teach them Optics. Shows a very diligent spirit. Indeed, as I told Mr. Goodman, I have seldom met with such an instance." I think at this moment Mr. Blackstone saw the mortification and despair that was in the face of Sidney's parent, and added with some encouragement, "Still, I am sure we shall have *him*," nodding to me, "asking to be taught Optics one of these days—yes, one of these days." Finding no encouragement in imparting this most improbable hope, Mr. Blackstone passed to another branch of the subject. "I was thinking," he said, "that as Arthur, and William, and Sidney, are purseeyewing the same course of studies it would be an additional spur to their eemulation." Mr. Blackstone delighted in these rich words, and from presence of the old oily sherry into which he was looking at the moment, seemed to gather kindred imagery. "I was thinking it would steamewlate eemewlation if we had a sort of competition-examination in the various branches. I think, with a little study, he," nodding to me, "would be able to hold his own. He knows his Euclid fairly—very fairly indeed. And to the candidate who answers best, you will allow me to present a nicely bound copy of Sturm's Reflections."

This project was received without enthusiasm, even with dejection, as only tending to fresh disgrace. "O! *he*"—they never *would* call me by my name—"will never study. *He* doesn't care to distinguish himself," &c. But Mr. Blackstone warming at the prospect succeeded in drawing a picture of victory, and brought round the whole family.

The period that followed I shall not soon forget. The operation of "grinding" me was taken in hand personally by Miss Simpson, "for this occasion only;" her capacity for the dead languages being equal to the duty of "hearing me." I was duly called up and made to rehearse in Alvarez's Prosody, the Latin Grammar, the Greek ditto, Mangnall's Questions, and other works. Virgil and Thucydides presented more serious difficulties to Miss Simpson, but the happy idea of securing a literal translation of the text suggested itself, and thus, being challenged to translate, I was successfully checked in any attempt at imposition.

The day came at last. In the interval, I hope and believe that the industrious Goodmans nearly killed themselves with study. I really worked hard; and in the house were a flutter and excitement, as it were of something akin to a marriage. It was indeed the first public act our house had known; the first entry on the broad stage of the world. There seemed to me an impression that it might get into the public papers. I proceed to the description of this tremendous occasion under a fresh heading.

NOW!

I NEVER saw but one hanging in my life. On that occasion my duties brought me into close contact with the culprit himself. I attended him on the scaffold and was with him to the last. The newspapers described the execution in the usual terms. They did not describe what I saw or heard. It may be they were justified in not doing so; it may be even, now when public executions have happily become a thing of the past, that I am not justified in recording an unprofessional view of the tragedy I witnessed. My plea is, that I have never yet read what has impressed me as a truthful account of any such scene.

As it can serve no possible purpose to mention real names I will simply state that the execution referred to, took place in a Northern Assize town, not very recently. The condemned was an old man of at least seventy; his offence, the brutal murder of an old woman, his wife.

I first saw the old man, say Giles, at seven o'clock on the morning in question. He was sitting in his cell, his head bent forward, and slowly shaking from side to side, not with trepidation, but with the tremulous palsy of old age that was natural to him. He was evidently a man of the dullest sensibilities, and in

whom feeling had become still more numbed by the consciousness of his approaching fate. He had passed a good night, and had freely partaken of that hearty breakfast which, strangely enough, all such felons do partake of for their last. The governor of the gaol entered to bid him farewell and to introduce the Sheriff. Giles shook hands with both, he stolid and emotionless. There was a little pause. They expected some one else. It was the only time Giles showed any feeling at all. He stopped shaking and looked furtively but eagerly towards the door. Even that was only the emotion of impatience. Calcraft entered. A mild gentle faced man—short, rather stout, with plentiful grey hair. I can see him as I write—his eyes full and grey, though small, and sweet in their expression. He does not "shamble," as he walks; nor does he talk coarsely. He walks softly at such times, as in the presence of impending death, and his voice is by no means unpleasant. His walk, his voice, his expression, and his manner, are in fact, completely reassuring. They were so to Giles. Having been introduced to his executioner and seen the calm self-reliant look of his eyes, Giles became perfectly calm, and resumed the monotonous shaking of his head from side to side. I can testify that whether from age or mental stupor he was the least affected of us all; and I am told this is usually the case.

Half-past seven o'clock struck, and the prison bell broke out in a harshly solemn toll. While we were getting ready to leave the cell it began —Toll! As we walked along the corridors it went on—Toll! It struck upon all our hearts —Toll! except Giles's.

Having entered the pinioning-room the chaplain began the solemn service for the dead. "I am the Resurrection and the Life"—Toll! "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die"—Toll!

Calcraft produced a small black leather portmanteau. Opening it, he disclosed his pinions, spare straps, and two ropes. The pinion is simply a broad leather strap or surcingle to go round the waist, having strong loops on either side, through which are passed the straps to secure the elbows. The wrists are then fastened by another strap.

"It's my own invention," Calcraft whispered with some modesty; "the old pinions used to be very bad, they hurt the poor fellows so. They used to strap their elbows tight behind them and force them together at the back, and then strap the two wrists together. This waist strap answers every purpose and is not the least uncomfortable."

"There," he whispered to Giles (for the chaplain still read on), when he had arranged the straps, "that doesn't hurt you, my good fellow?"

"No, sir; it's very comfortable."

And the chaplain still read on, and the bell broke in like a solemn amen. "For since by man came death——" Toll!

"Shake hands with me, Giles," said the mild man with the grey hair; "say you forgive me. You shall not be tortured."

"I forgive thee, mister;" and he offered his poor pinioned hands, like fins, which Calcraft shook kindly. Toll!

"There's one thing I should like 'ee to do," said Giles.

"Yes," said Calcraft.

"Will 'ee tell I when *it's comin'*. Thee know what I mean."

"I will," returned the executioner. Toll!

The "Lesson" was not yet finished. No one of us paid attention to it, or to any of that part of the service (least of all did Giles), save when the bell struck out like a solemn voice from the sky; "Heed that!" Then we remembered the word or two that had gone before. To me the reading of the clergyman sounded like the babble of a dream, and the bell, and the gentle old man, and the pinioned murderer the only realities. (Toll! "And how are the dead raised up?")

I saw Calcraft return to his black portmanteau to select the rope. Intent, against my will, more on the details of the dreadful tragedy than on the service, that only broke out on me in snatches, I pointed to the cord, and whispered,

"New?"

"Oh, no; the same I've used these three years." ("Changed as in a moment." Toll!)

"I thought you always had a new rope?"

"Oh dear, no."

"Is it silk?" I had heard so.

"No; the very best of hemp."

He gave it into my hand. A supple cord, soft as silk, as thick as my forefinger. ("Oh! grave, where is thy victory?" Toll!)

"And the cap?"

"Ah, yes! It's the sheriffs'—the one they use here—but it's a bad one. I would rather use my own. Look here"—and he took from the portmanteau a small bag, like silk, and inserting his hands in it, stretched it out to an enormous size—"that's the one, if they would only let me use it." It was the only professional remark he made.

The lesson was done. Toll! Toll! Toll!

The bell ceased. It was the service by the grave side.

We joined in procession. "Man that is born of woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery." Chanting this solemn dirge in monotone, the chaplain led the way along the passage and up a ladder staircase to the prison roof. Giles followed, shambling uneasily from the straps about his legs, but otherwise in less outward concern than any of us. He seemed to derive relief from that palsied swaying of his head which was natural to him.

As we mounted the scaffold, a restless murmur, like a great sigh, went through the sea of white upturned faces below—then a hush. Calcraft came to the poor culprit, and drew the cap over his face, to hide the sea of faces from his eyes. Then he fixed the rope—with long pains to arrange the knot in the most merciful place,

and to judge the amount of fall. While this was doing, Giles worked his hands—all that were free of him—up and down rapidly in the attitude of prayer. The chaplain was reading a prayer. The reporters said he prayed. They were wrong. I was close to him, and I heard what he said. His words were addressed to Calcraft. "Tell me, mister—be I goin' now?"

"No," said the executioner; "I'll tell you when."

The prayer was done.

"Tell me, mister," said Giles again, "be I goin' *now?*"

"No," said Calcraft. "I'll give you a sign. When I shake hands with you, you will have just half a minute left."

The chaplain knelt to pray with Giles. Giles did not or would not hear.

"Be I goin' NOW?" he said.

Calcraft came and shook his pinioned hand. "God bless you!" he said, gently, "for it is NOW!" and he slipped away.

Then the old man woke up; all his senses quickened by the knowledge that only one half minute of precious life remained—only one half minute! Till now he had been numbed and lulled into the belief that *it* was a long way off. Now it was come. He broke out, as rapidly as he could gabble:

"Oh Lord, have mercy on my poor soul! Oh Lord, have mercy on my poor soul! Oh Lord, have——"

Cr, *chunk!* And there was a fall, and something was swaying to and fro, to and fro, till at last it became steady, and twisted from right to left, from left to right. And there was the noise of a crowd that had been silent, that drew a long sighing breath of relief, and woke up into life to go about its business.

LEAVES FROM THE MAHOGANY TREE.

RISE AND PROGRESS OF FRENCH COOKING.

YOUR practised historian can, as is well known, make a very pretty whipped cream by beating together half-a-dozen theories seasoned with two or three facts cut into very thin slices for garnishing. But this dish is too light and unsatisfying for some stomachs, and we therefore regret that so little has been preserved to enable us to form any sound conclusion as to the sorts of cooking that nourished and delighted the French of the dark ages.

The old Roman and Greek cooks went out at one door when the howling Norsemen and their raven banner broke in at the other. The days of epicurean glory were followed by a long and terrible obscurity, as Brillat Saverin says in his own exquisite way:

"At the apparition of these fierce strangers the alimentary art disappeared with the other sciences of which it is both the companion and the consoler. The greater part of the cooks were massacred in the palaces which they had nourished; others fled to avoid being compelled to regale the oppressors of their country; the few who offered their services had the mortification of seeing them rejected. The ferocious mouths, the scorched throats, were insensible to the charms of refined cooking. Enormous joints of meat and sides of venison, with immeasurable quantities of the strongest liquors sufficed to please them; and as the usurpers were always armed, most of their repasts degenerated into orgies, and the banquet hall too often swam with blood."

Gradually civilisation stole in and parted the ponderous joints into humanising side dishes. Friends were invited not to glut their hunger, but to be regaled. The great Charlemagne, amid his dreams of European empire, took a personal interest in his table; and it appears from his Capitularies that he studied wisely and carefully the epicurean resources of his vast domains.

The French kings, contemporaneous with our Henrys and Edwards, gave a gallant and chivalrous character to their entertainments, as we see in Froissart. There was great luxury and splendour too at the table of John of France, and at that of the early Louis.

Both at Paris and Windsor the knights of those days saw with exultation the pheasants with gilt claws, or the peacocks with emerald and purple plumes outspread, borne through the castle hall by pages glittering with gold, while the warriors, bound on deeds of high emprise, flashed out their swords, and vowed to save Bordeaux or storm Beauvais in the name of "The Peacock and the Ladies." Now that women had come back to the dining-table to humanise society by their presence there were hopes for good and refined cooking once more.

In such wealthy and luxurious courts as those of the Sforza, the Borgias, and the Medici, cooking soon became a high art. We must recal the domestic pictures of Bellini, of Titian, and of Giorgione to realise the banquets of those times. The spices that the Venetians brought from the East came in excellently to heighten the flavours and strengthen the taste of the happy inspirations of the new art. The palate, too, of our ancestors differed in its liking from ours. The pre-Raphaelite Italians liked to flavour their ragouts with the perfumed waters of Arabia and Moorish Spain, and they sometimes boiled fish in rose-water. Even down to Elizabeth's reign this unnatural taste continued, and ambergris was largely used in cooking at the tables of the great. Indeed the good time came on so fast, that the French kings were soon obliged to issue sumptuary laws, which met with the usual fate of all attempts to bridle fashion or to restrain luxury.

The crusades had at least this one result, that the French crusaders bore with reverent hands the shalotte from the sandy battle plains of Ascalon and brought it to the European kitchen. There can be no question than the science of modern French cooking is an edifice of many stories, which the great and wise of many centuries built up stone by stone. The

major domos of popes, lady abbesses, kings' favourites, learned artists, Arabian alchemists, Venetian physicians, have all helped to rear this imperishable Tower of Babel. The cooks taken prisoners by Louis the Twelfth when he invaded Italy, cast their bread upon the waters, and it returned to them before many days. Many of the recherché, light, and tempting dishes, invented by these exiles, and tinged with the sentiment of their situation, still obtain in France. Empires may pass away, but the fricassée will remain. A feminine grace was now added to the robust cooking of the middle ages. This was a time of greater inventions than steam. Steam! Why it is to the time of Leo the Tenth that we are indebted for the Fricandeau, that delicious larded segment of veal, stewed with bacon, spices, carrots, onions, and parsley, and served with Macedonian sauce or sorel. The sublime inventor of this delicious morsel was Jean de Carême (Jack o' Lent), who derived his name from a celebrated soup maigre, which he invented for the Pope, his master. He was the direct ancestor of our modern Carême, who was cook to George the Fourth, and afterwards to Baron Rothschild. It was the same Pope who fostered the genius of Raphael and the genius of the discoverer of the fricandeau.

It is also more than probable that we owe the useful invention of forks to this same splendid and luxurious age. The Romans had no forks. It took man five thousand five hundred odd years before he could invent the fricandeau or discover the use of forks. Think of that! Voltaire's statement that forks were in use in Europe in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries has hitherto been disputed; but we have lately discovered a fact which we think is important, as it upsets many previous theories of social historians. Hitherto Fynes Moryson, an Elizabethan traveller, and Thomas Coryat, a Jacobean traveller, have always been quoted as proof of the earliest mention of forks as a new invention of the sixteenth century. Moryson says, "At Venice each person was served (besides his knife and spoon) with a fork to hold the meat while he cuts it, for there they deem it ill-manners that one should touch it with his hand." Coryat, writing in 1604, describes with his usual Pepysian unction the Venetian custom of forks and umbrellas, and adds of the former, "I myself have thought it good to imitate the Italian fashion since I came home to England," and describes his merciless friend, Mr. Whittaker, who does not scruple at table to nickname him "Furcifer," from his fantastic predilection to those "Italian neatnesses," namely, forks. Now, at the present Art Exhibition at Leeds, there happens to be a singular picture by Bernardino Pinturricchio (1454–1513) epitomising events in the history of the Piccolomini of Sienna (Number Eleven, Gallery A). In one part of this picture there are tables laid out ready prepared for a banquet. They stand near a buffet of several tiers, on which are arranged gold cups and chased salvers. On the tables you can see a knife and fork laid for every guest, besides a manchet or roll. There are also Venetian enamelled red dishes, and if we remember right, little nosegays placed with great taste for each person. This, therefore, clearly proves that though Voltaire might be hasty in placing the introduction of forks as early as he does, yet that forks were in full use in Italy before 1513. The fact is incontrovertible.

But the great epoch in French cooking was when Henry the Fourth, his favourite the Duchess of Beaufort being dead, married Mary of Medicis.

Mr. Hayward, who has written so learnedly, and with such refined taste and pleasant humour on the gastronomic science, particularly mentions that the culinary artists in Mary's train first introduced ices into France. Yes; that delicious sweetmeat ice, perfumed with the essence of fruits, was the invention of a contemporary of the divine Raphael.

The great Condé, the foe of Mazarin, and the knightly leader of the Fronde and the slingers of De Retz's party, was nourished and supported at Rocroi, that great fight, and at the great jostles of Sens and Nordlingen by the good cooking of his immortal maître d'hôtel, Vâtel, that generous spirit who threw himself on the edge of his own sword at Chantilly, because an insufficient quantity of turbots and lobsters had arrived from the seaports, the second day of the king's visit.

In his old age Louis the Fourteenth, methodical in everything, a formalist, and a stickler for the severest etiquette, became fanciful about his diet; and it was to protect him from the grosser fat of cutlets that Madame de Maintenon devised the celebrated Côtelettes à la Maintenon. The wily devotee first stewed the cutlets in the Venetian way for an hour with mushrooms, shalot, parsley, rasped bacon, and a little butter. She then seasoned them with salt and pepper, cut some bacon into the shape of hearts to place at each side of them, wrapped them in oiled writing paper, and broiled them on a very slow fire, so that the paper might absorb all the grease; then she put in a spoonful of velouté, and thickened with the yolks of three eggs, mixed with cream, lemon juice, and a spice of cayenne pepper. What a delicate proof of ever vigilant love! These cutlets were no doubt suggested by the overpowering genius of Béchamel, the author of one of the most exquisite sauces ever devised by man. It is made of butter, slices of veal, ham, onions, mushrooms, and parsley, stewed together, but in what proportions we can only mention privately, and to acknowledged gourmets; several spoonsfull of flour, some consommé, and a little boiling cream bring this divine sauce to final perfection. Liqueurs are said to have been invented to console the old age of the Grand Monarch. Distillation, the alchemist's art, brought to Europe, it is said, by the Crusaders, if not derived from the Moors in Spain, had not led to the general use of brandy much before the

early part of the reign of Louis the Fourteenth. The alcoholic basis, sweetened with sugar and enriched with perfumes, proved to be capable of infinite shades of variation. The old medical cordial became the new liqueur of the dinner table. The last beverage the king partook of on earth was a liqueur from Provence.

Louis the Fifteenth was essentially an epicure, and nothing else. Louis the Fourteenth had crossed the Rhine bravely, had driven his coaches full of ladies round besieged places, and had excelled at tennis and pall mall; but Louis the Fifteenth excelled in nothing except dining. His little suppers at Choisy were gayer and more riotous than the formal parades, or rather religious ceremonies that Louis the Fourteenth organised at Versailles, as magnificent and as tedious as the splendour of that exhausting place. The conversation, the abandonment of royalty, was not to be witnessed by profane eyes, and some great mechanist, patronised by the Pompadour, met this want by inventing the tables volantes, which, descending to the kitchen and rising again to the state apartments, must have been perfect, except that, through the opening trap door must have arisen oily steams from below. It was to please this voluptuous, vain, and selfish king that the Duchess de Mailly wasted her ingenuity by inventing the Gigot à la Mailly.

Louis the Sixteenth was too full of his key making and ironmongering to care much for eating. He neglected to keep his friends in good humour by good dinners, or to win his enemies by those matelottes and truffled turkeys, for which the Duke of Orleans had been famous. So naturally he succumbed before the Revolution.

The restaurants, commencing in 1770 with the Champ d'Oiseau, Rue des Poulies, were probably at first started in imitation of English taverns, and indicated the advance of democratic opinions. In 1789, the Parisian restaurants had increased to one hundred, in 1804 to five or six hundred, and they now far exceed a thousand. The Almanac des Gourmands attributes the growth of these useful establishments and the consequent dissemination of refined and high cooking among the masses to several reasons. First, the inundation of legislators, who, dining out, made it by degrees fashionable to frequent the restaurants; secondly, the breaking up of the houses of the rich secular and clerical nobility, whose cooks took refuge and found a generous asylum in the restaurants. Foremost among these Mariuses was Robert (he who invented the most *intellectual* of sauces) ci-devant chef of an archbishop of Aix. Lastly, it was generally supposed that the new rich men of the Revolution, with the whizz of the guillotine still in their ears, were not anxious to flash their wealth in the eyes of a jealous mistrustful and dangerous people, and, therefore, hid away their hospitality, and devoted themselves to the unobserved luxuries of the public restaurant.

Napoleon ate like a soldier whenever the appetite came, night or day, and eventually shortened his life by it; but there was no real royal epicureanism till Louis the Eighteenth rolled back with the Bourbonists. His great friend and adviser on culinary matters of state was the Duke d'Escars. The prayer of this able man's life was that he might be immortalised by inventing a lasting dish; but he never did, or if he did, he showed the true devotion of a Decius, and let his friend and sovereign enjoy the fame of the discovery.

History has not decided whether the favourite dish of Duke d'Escars and Louis the Eighteenth was truffes à la purée d'ortolans, or as some writers insist on having it, a pâté des saucissons. Whenever these two globular men, the Duke and his royal master, closeted themselves together to perfect this dish, or to discuss the first thought of another, the following announcement always appeared next day in the official journal,

"M. le Duc d'Escars a travaillé dans le cabinet."

The duke fell a victim at last to the truffe à la purée d'ortolans, a dish which the king kept a secret from the servants and always prepared with his own hands, aided by the duke. This time the dish was larger than usual, and at breakfast the noble pair ate the whole of it. At night they were both taken dreadfully ill. The duke was soon pronounced hopeless, but, faithful to the last, he instantly ordered the king to be awoke and warned of the danger of a similar attack. The king was aroused and told that the duke was dying.

"Dying?" the king exclaimed, with admirable feeling, and more philosophy—"dying of my truffes à la purée? You see, then, I was right. I always said that I had the better stomach of the two."

Alas for human anecdotes! Other versions of this story say that the king also suffered, and that a witty and sarcastic French journal announced the event, thus coarsely and in the worst possible taste:

"Yesterday, his very Christian majesty was attacked with an indigestion, of which M. the Duke d'Escars died this afternoon."

Louis le Désiré was an epicure to the last. With all his tact and sense and bon mots, he was an eater quite as regardful of quantity as quality. Between the first and second course he would often have a plate of exquisite little pork cutlets, dressed after a rare recipe, handed to him by one of the pages. He would take these trifles up one by one with his white fat fingers, and clear the dish before the second service could be arranged.

The Revolution brought in the pièces de résistance and potatoes au naturel. The celebrated Rocher de Cancale, established before 1804, and broken up since 1848, first gained its name by M. Baleire, its founder, bringing oysters to Paris fresh at all seasons. The Rocher was especially famous for frogs and (we shudder to record it)—Robin Redbreasts—yes, those innocent birds, who sing, like weeping children, the dirge of the year and the fall of

the leaf, are of a delicate bitter flavour; and at Metz and in Lorraine and Alsace form an important article of commerce. The Almanac des Gourmands says, with ruthless irony:

"The redbreast is the sad proof of this truth, that the gourmand is by nature and in his very essence a being cruel and inhuman; for he has no pity on this charming bird of passage, whose gentleness and confiding familiarity should shelter him from the rude hands of the cook. But, then, if one pitied everybody, one would eat nothing; and, commiseration apart, we must allow that the robin, which holds a conspicuous rank in the class of beccafici, is a very succulent roast. This amiable bird is eaten à la broche and en salmis."

Frogs are delicious fricasseed or fried with crisp parsley, so says an eminent authority, and what all France also says and half America confirms must be true. The first frog we ate, we took for a young rabbit, until we shuddered on finding its blanched bones soft and gristly. We do not know when these amphibious creatures were first bred and fed for the table. We have a suspicion that frogs are not eaten so much in Paris as they used to be thirty years ago. The animal has grown scarcer, but the snowy hind legs, gracefully extended on a plate, are still seen in the Parisian markets.

Research has not enabled us to ascertain either, at what date that nutritious article of food, snails, was first used in French cookery. They are still sold in heaps in the shops on the quays near the Louvre, and are also to be seen in glutinous cohesive masses in the shops of small restaurants in ambiguous streets leading out of Leicester-square.

French cooking, historically considered, recals some pleasant scenes to every one who has ever crossed the Channel. There is something very sociable and pleasant in the way in which a French bourgeois family prepares for a meal. I see one before me now. The English of the same class too often sit down in a sullen, stolid, revengeful way, preserving a dead silence, and apparently sworn to begin the attack at the same moment. They really do manage these things better in France. The good bonhomme tucks his napkin in his top button-hole, his smiling wife adjusts the serviette round the neck of her favourite Madelaine, the youngest; the bread is made a matter of great study. After the soup is gone, the wholesome but not inebriating Medoc is turned impartially into the glasses. The slices of veal pass round, and are selected with discrimination, yet without selfishness. Last of all, comes the little dessert, that fitting finale for a light and digestible dinner. "The Four Beggars" are discussed with simple-hearted unction, the figs praised, the nuts commended, the raisins eulogised, the almonds admired.

"Pooh, sir! It is all very well," grumbles our true Englishman; "but a frivolous nation that has never been free since the first Revolution, and not then, is naturally disposed to rejoice for small indulgences."

Yet, Monsieur l'Anglais, it is a great thing to be easily pleased.

A French restaurant is a pleasant place, and how unlike an English dining-room! What can be pleasanter than a seat near the open door on a summer evening, say at Véfour's? The noise is a complex but not disagreeable sound. Trees rustling without, the children playing with their bonnes; twilight yielding to lamplight gradually up the arcades; a comedy close by, and you imagine what it will be—scenes from the Revolution as once enacted in this pleasant square gleam red across the mirror of your glass of Burgundy. The waiters skim and flit about, cheerful and epigrammatic, delighting in the applause with which special dishes are received, and proud of their benevolent occupation. How monsieur and madame enjoy their dinner, crowing over each plat, smiling at the freshness of the salad, applauding the fragrance of the meringue! How they laugh at the smallest of jokes, and make bon mots upon their favourite waiter! How they address themselves to the coffee and the chasse! The gaiety of the French waiter, and the way he finally dashes up the items, is worth the price of the dinner in itself.

What agreeable memories the travelled Englishman brings with him too from the Continent, of his dinners at French railway stations. Such kindly promptitude, such bland alacrity to oblige, such an honest wish to fully earn the money and see the meal quietly enjoyed. On the great French line to Strasburg you can now have a dinner of several covers brought you in your railway carriage; you eat as you go, and return the dishes and plates by the guard. This is luxury indeed! But the ordinary French railway-station dinner (especially when there are not too many epergnes and too much plate upon the table) is very pleasant. The warm, nourishing soup, the savoury cutlet or slice of veal, with sorel, the hot meat and cresses, the sweet omelette, the macaroon, and bunch of grapes, all come in such tasteful order, and are so fairly what they seem, that they make us shudder at the thought of the English railway station, with its vapid beer, dry biscuit, and stale sandwiches, the costly peppered soup that is never ready when you want it, the salt ham and the leaden pork-pie!

The great tree of French cookery struck root on the day when Mary de Medicis set foot in Marseilles; it is still throwing forth its lavish branches, and may it flourish till the crack of doom! France, foster-mother of the vine, what tyrant or conqueror can break thy plates or put out thy stoves, while thy various provinces feed thee with such dainties! Strasbourg and Toulouse with foies gras, Angoulême with partridge patés, Le Mans and La Flêche with capons, Perigord with truffled turkeys. Nerac sends her terrines; Sarlat her red-legged partridges; Arles her sausages; Troyes her little tongues and her fromage de cochon; Cancale and Etretat send their oysters; Strasbourg gives her salmon, carp, and crawfish; Rouen her ducklings, Dijon, Chalons, and Rheims send their mustard,

Aix her peerless oil, Verdun her sweetmeats, Metz her ortolans, Pithiviers her larks and almond cakes, Alençon her fat geese, Orleans her vinegars, Cognac her eau-de-vie, Bordeaux her anisette, Montpellier her cream of Mocha, Cette her oil of roses, Brignolles her preserved plums, Ollioules her plums and figs.

Many scientific brains, and many artful hands, have for centuries experimented on French cooking, which, if less solid than English, is more appetising, more alluring. Science will doubtless continue to be devoted to this great art, which has done much to extend peace, binding families and nations by a common tie of social interest which no inroad of barbarians can snap.

DOLES.

My old college chum, Tom Bradshaw, had recently been appointed rector of Doleshurst, and wheedled me down to spend a week's vacation with him. The day after my arrival,—at breakfast-time too—he startled me with this question:

"Can you guess what I have in that leathern bag beside you?"

"It is uncommonly heavy," said I. "Probably geological specimens."

"Wrong," he replied; "you have there three thousand bright profiles of her gracious majesty, impressed on three thousand florins fresh from the mint."

"What can you want with so many florins?"

"Why, you must know that they have made me a sort of trustee down here; that is, the clerk, the sexton, and the keepers of five beershops, met the other day, and unanimously elected me a trustee in place of my predecessor. A worthy old dean, leaving the world in peace three or four hundred years ago, bequeathed an estate, which now produces more than three hundred pounds a year, to be given away in charity. Now, it strikes me that this three hundred pounds just serves the purpose of the 'potation money,' which, you know, fell to our lot as Blueboys at the old school of Winterbourne. I am told that for two or three days after this dole is distributed, there is an unusual proportion of black eyes and broken heads in the village. The money, it is said, is all spent in tippling, and I will find out whether that is the fact."

The morning of the next day was a busy time with the clerk, the sexton, and the five publicans. They distributed little tickets to all comers—old, young, and middle aged. It was a day of idleness to the ticket-seekers. They lounged in groups, or sat outside the village inns, and smoked and drank their ale contentedly. In the evening the ticket-holders passed one by one through a room where my friend and I sat; I took the tickets from each, and for every ticket he gave a florin. The claimants were chiefly labourers or peasant children. I thought that the dole, though small to each, might be a help where the family was large. There were some, however, whose dress and bearing proved that they did not need the dole; and I noticed that all the broken-down delinquents of the neighbourhood were present. The business was done quickly, however, and without confusion. There were, indeed, some sounds of strife outside, and rough voices demanded of crying children the coin they had received. But that was soon over, and my friend and I gladly returned to the rectory and its waving trees.

That night there was little sleep at Doleshurst. We strolled out into the darkness, and passed through the straggling town. The five beershops were all lighted up from basement to attic, and broad bands of light fell from their windows on the street. Sounds of contention, complaint, entreaty, and drunken passion, mixed with choruses of tuneless song. Now a door would be opened, a struggle would be visible in the passage, a knot of men tangled together would be ejected into the street, and then would follow curses, threats, and blows. Here a weeping wife supported a staggering husband; there, little children, pulling the unwilling hands of the maundering father, led him away.

Next day my chum and I went on a curious errand. We visited the five beershops in succession, and told the five keepers that we wanted a large number of florins. In all the beershops there were piles of florins, soiled wet florins sticking together. The bright silver, with the exception of a very small percentage, had found its way within twelve hours into the publicans' tills. Thus, the dole, like the old relief given at the monastery gate, produced poverty, idleness, and vice, and more was lost by the labourer who received it than the wages he forfeited in seeking and spending what was designed to afford substantial relief to deserving but poor men.

This incident at Doleshurst set me upon a search, and I soon found that dole funds are very numerous, and that, almost without exception, this kind of charity does nothing but mischief. Parliament has recently contributed to blue-book literature a series of twenty-four ponderous octavo volumes, of several hundred pages each. It is named the Report of the Commissioners on the Endowed Grammar Schools of England. In the first volume of the series, I found a brief record of some of these ancient doles and their results. At Almondbury, four hundred and fifty pounds are annually distributed to the poor in sums of five or six shillings; and the vicar says, "the beneficial effect is neither seen nor felt longer than two or three days at most." The vestry of another parish distribute five hundred pounds a year, and the vestrymen appoint tradesmen as distributors. When a baker is elected distributor, the dole is given in bread; a coal factor thinks there is nothing like coals; a publican distributes ale and gin. In another parish for "two weeks before and one week after the distribution, extra waiters are put on at the beershops." At Bewdley, in North Wor-

cestershire, the Mill Meadow Charity amounts to one hundred pounds a year, and this is given in sums of from two shillings to eight shillings and ninepence each. On the last distribution, out of a population of three thousand one hundred and fifty-eight, one thousand three hundred and eighty applicants appeared, "among them many people of substance."

At Lichfield six hundred pounds a year is given away in gratuities, and during the summer market gardeners waste high wages "in expectation of living on charity during the winter." At Chesterfield, out of a charity producing fourteen hundred pounds a year, eleven hundred pounds is disposed of "in small sums, and in a manner every intelligent person considers unsatisfactory." There are apprenticeship funds amounting to fifty thousand pounds a year, yet the charity inspectors think that the fees are frequently divided, by an underhand arrangement, between the parent and the master who receives the boy. The charity funds in England, applicable to doles, "cannot amount to less than one hundred and twenty thousand pounds a year, wasted as water poured upon the sand." At Chipping Sodbury, there is an apprentice fee fund; there have been only thirty-eight applications in twenty years, and the accumulations amount to six hundred and sixty pounds. In the City of London, there are charities "for the redemption of poor persons and captives." One fund, amounting to one thousand seven hundred and forty pounds a year, has accumulated to upwards of fifteen thousand pounds, "for which there is little, if any, use at present." Sir T. White's loan charities have a capital of one hundred and twenty-five thousand pounds. There is a loan fund in Westminster with thirty thousand pounds, "and very little purpose to which it can be applied." Persons borrow two hundred pounds or three hundred pounds from such charities, at one or two per cent, and place it in joint stock banks at five or six per cent. There is in the parish of St. Andrew Undershaft, a sum of thirty thousand pounds and there are many other funds of a similar kind in the City of London, devised as aids in the payment of the ancient and obsolete tax called "The Fifteenth." The trustees do not know what to do with these sums. At Melton Mowbray, there is the Tower estate administered by a tumultuous "Tower meeting," and as no poll is taken, "the decision depends on the first one hundred people who can get into the small town hall." At Berwick, after the expenses of the corporation have been defrayed out of an old estate, producing now ten thousand pounds a year, the surplus is divided among the freemen under the name of "Stints and Meadows," the town clerk receiving ten pounds or eleven pounds yearly.

Such doles and bequests were possibly suited to a state of civilization very different from the present. But society has outrun all the conditions which the testators contemplated in their age. This is a utilising epoch; and since my short visit to Doleshurst, I fancy that something more suited to our day, and better for the people, could be effected by charitable bequests than scattering them in silver florins broadcast among an idle mob for the special benefit of beerhouses.

MUSIC AND MISERY.

THE more people love music, when it is good and comes to their call, the more they usually hate and abhor it when it is not good, and comes unbidden. Even the best of music, when it breaks suddenly upon the ear of one who is engaged in thoughtful labour or hard study of any kind, is not agreeable; but when discord, instead of harmony, bursts upon the outraged silence of the library, the studio, or the sick-room, then is music but another name for misery.

Business lately called me to London for a week; a consideration connected with its facile transaction led me to take up my residence in one of the streets branching southwards from the Strand to the river; a quiet street to all appearance — a highly respectable street, a street through which ran no omnibus, and into which no cab or other vehicle ever penetrated, unless to set down or take up a fare, or to deliver the goods duly ordered. I had not been three hours within these peaceable precincts before I discovered that the transaction of business in this respectable street was simply impossible, that I had been deceived by false appearances, and that as a residence it was a very Pandemonium of discords and evil sounds from daylight until long after dark. The lodgers in every house—for it is a street of private hotels and "apartments to let"—appeared to be, like myself, people who had come from the country, but who, unlike me, were idle, and fond of the amusement to be extracted out of street music and street exhibitions. One particular day, being detained at home against my will, the thought struck me to note down from hour to hour the arrival and the departure of these nuisances, the nature of the torture they inflicted, and the encouragement or discouragement which they received from the lazy, the silly, or the generous inhabitants. The day was not an exceptional one, as I was informed by my landlady, but a fair sample of every day in the year.

Half-past Eight.—Sitting down to breakfast and The Times, I hear a sudden and obstreperous outburst of brazen instruments, which makes me literally start to my feet and rush to the window to see what is the matter. It is a German band of twelve performers, all well dressed in uniform, and wearing each a semi-military cap. They set up their music-stands in the street, and play from printed and manuscript music. Their performances consist of overtures and pieces from popular operas, very excellently rendered. I am told that they are hired by one family to perform twice a week before the door, and that they supplement the

gratuity or payment which they may receive for this service by such smaller contributions as they can collect elsewhere. They do not rely upon the crowd of bystanders, or upon voluntary contributions, but send round the youngest member of the party, who knocks or rings at the door of every house in the street, and, hat in hand, gathers whatever coppers the servant girl or others are inclined to bestow. He appears to be successful in about one house out of three. The performances continue for about twenty minutes, and would not only be tolerable, but commendable, if they took place in one of the parks at a seasonable hour, or people were not compelled to listen to them unless they pleased.

Nine o'clock.—A bulky Savoyard, ugly as a baboon, and as dirty, with a barrel-organ. He grinds, Partant pour la Syrie, Not for Joseph, and Champagne Charlie. His tunes are such a nuisance that I put my hat on, go to the street door, and order him away. He pretends not to understand me. I speak to him in Italian, and let him know that I shall hand him over to the police if he will not immediately desist from grinding. He swears and scowls. I reiterate my threat. He sees I am in earnest, and finally slings his heavy organ upon his brawny back, and sulkily departs, followed by the not very amiable wish on my part that he had his box of discords in his paunch instead of on his shoulders.

Twenty minutes to Ten.—Eight sham niggers—white men with blackened faces—wearing the usual absurd caricature of negro costume which does duty in London and elsewhere, for the dress of the plantation negroes in the Southern States of America. The leader of the band does not blacken his face, but wears a mask to represent Punchinello. He is active, well made, agile, and a good low comedian. This party sings both comic and sentimental songs, almost, if not quite as well, as the real Christy Minstrels, whom people pay their half-crowns to hear. Windows are lifted right and left, and pence and half-pence rattle on the pavement. The cooks and servant girls appear to be the chief patronesses of the show. The niggers stay for a quarter of an hour, and march off at a sign from Punchinello. They evidently make a good thing of it, and are prime favourites.

Half-past Ten.—Two young men, ragged and shoeless, invade the street, and sing, "We have no work to do-o-o," with the usual drawl. They are not very successful, but far more so than they deserve, and get a solitary penny from the house that hires the brass band. Seeing they have no chance they depart, to the great satisfaction, it is to be presumed, of everybody, even of the small children, and of the cooks and the housemaids.

Eleven o'clock.—An old man, thinly clad and feeble, with venerable grey hairs, whistling, but so very faintly as to be scarcely audible. He presents so forlorn an appearance, and his idea of attracting anybody's attention by such a weakly performance, appears to me so absurd that I pity him to the extent of a penny. I throw it out to him wrapped in a piece of paper. He catches it in his hat, opens the paper, takes out the penny, and spits upon it three times (for luck I suppose), and goes on whistling. Poor old fellow! He at least has not the power, even if he had the will, to make the street hideous with noise. It is possible that I should not have heard his faint attempt at music, if my attention were not specially directed to the subject, and very doubtful whether any one else in the street is aware of his presence.

Fifteen minutes past Eleven.—A drum. An abominable monotonous outrage. It is a Lascar beating the tom-tom, and every now and then breaking out into a moan, a whine, a grunt, a shriek, or all these four diabolically blended into one. He is the most repulsive and savage-looking creature I ever beheld. Gaunt and wiry as a hyena, and with the same hideous expression of countenance, he strongly impresses me with the idea that he must be Nana Sahib, who massacred the women and children at Cawnpore, or some other Eastern scoundrel quite as detestable; if prolific nature has ever yet produced a match to that specimen of her handiwork. There is no policeman to be seen, and I think if I were a policeman, I should be rather shy of tackling such an ugly customer.

Five minutes past Twelve.—Another brass band, the performers boys and lads from the "Fatherland," who play so loudly and so execrably that I wish the "Fatherland" had them back again, or that Count Bismarck would take hold of them for the next Sadowa, that his own or his royal master's ambition or vanity may compel him to fight. They perform for ten minutes. At their cessation the silence is delightful.

Twenty minutes to One.—A woman grinding a barrel-organ, with a baby fast asleep upon the top of it. The tune is the eternal Partant pour la Syrie. When she ceases for a moment to collect pence the baby awakes: when she recommences, it falls asleep again. She traverses the street slowly from end to end, receives a penny. She then mercifully, or perhaps hopelessly, makes her way out and grinds no more.

Quarter past One.—An Italian boy, apparently of about fourteen years of age, with a hurdy-gurdy. He whistles to it as an accompaniment. The combination is horrible and past endurance. I go to the window and order him away. He stops whistling, to grin at me, and removes himself to the distance of two houses, where he recommences his performance. If there be a policeman in sight, I shall assuredly have him removed per force majeure. But no policeman has been seen the whole morning, and none is visible now. This young tormentor plagues me and the street for five minutes before he goes his way. I feel towards him, as I did in the case of his elder

compatriot with the barrel organ, that I should have been glad if his hurdy-gurdy were in his entrails, and persisted in remaining there and playing for a week!

Twenty minutes to Two.—Another Italian, with a barrel organ and a monkey. The monkey very like a Fenian, the man not so good looking. Why does not the Re Galantuomo keep these lazy Italians to himself? This fellow would make excellent food for powder. Two little children and a nursemaid at the opposite side of the street, seem delighted with the monkey; but what their opinion of the music is, I have no means of judging.

Half past Two.—A performer on the cornet-a-piston, plays The Last Rose of Summer, and Auld Lang Syne, neither very well, nor very badly. His music brings up half-a-dozen female heads from the areas on either side of the way. He makes, what is in theatrical parlance called a succès d'estime, but does not favour the street beyond ten minutes.

A quarter past Three.—A lad in shabby Highland costume, exhibits a pair of legs that do not show to advantage, and plays villanously on the bag-pipes, the well-known air of Bonnie Laddie. The cooks, housemaids, and children, seem to be well pleased; but when he changes the air to the Reel of Tulloch, the joy of the little ones grows frantic. Three or four girls of eight or ten who have strayed down the street from some of the contiguous alleys on the other side of the Strand, get up a little dance on the pavement. A policeman, for the first time during the day, makes his appearance. What he might have done, if the performer had been a negro minstrel, singing the Chickaleery Cove, I know not, but he evidently neither admires the music of the bagpipes, nor the sight of the little children enjoying themselves; so he orders away the piper in a manner that shows he is not in a humour to allow his authority to be trifled with. Resistance being hopeless the piper departs and blessed silence once again prevails for a brief space.

Five minutes to Four.—A blind old man, playing the violin, led by a young woman—possibly his daughter. His tunes are mostly Scotch, and miserably perverted. If no one were permitted to play an instrument in the streets without a licence, and if none but the blind were eligible for the privilege, the plague of minstrelsy in London might be beneficially diminished. I make a present of this idea to any metropolitan member who thinks well enough of it, to introduce it to the legislature.

Ten minutes past Four.—Punch and Judy, the most popular theatrical performance that ever was invented, and known and enjoyed by millions, who never heard of Macbeth or Hamlet, and never will. The street suddenly seems to swarm with children, nor are older people at all scarce within two minutes after the familiar squeak. The policeman again turns up. He has apparently no objection to Punch, or if he has he makes none. The play proceeds; and as it is opposite my window, I make the most of it—and if I must tell the truth, I enjoy it. The dog that appears towards the last act, is a first-rate performer, cool and collected; and when Punch hits him a little too hard, he fastens upon Punch's nose in a manner that impresses the audience with the idea, that he thoroughly believes it to be flesh and blood. Good dog! I should think that Punch clears about eighteenpence by this little interlude, sixpence whereof was mine, for I had been seen to laugh, and could not expect to enjoy such a luxury without paying for it. If the manager of this ambulatory theatre repeats his performance ten or a dozen times a day, with the same pecuniary results, he must make what is called "a tolerably good thing of it."

Five o'clock.—Barrel organ, Champagne Charlie, Not for Joseph, and Adeste Fidelis. No policeman.

Twenty-five minutes past Five.—Barrel organ. Partant pour la Syrie. How I hate it! Followed by Adeste Fidelis, which if possible, I hate still more. No policeman.

Six o'clock.—An old man with a fiddle; an old woman with a concertina; and a younger woman with a baby at her breast. The young woman sings, and the older performers murder the music. This is even a worse infliction than the barrel organ; and lasts for about five minutes. Much as the street seems to love music, it evidently does not love this specimen of harmony, and not a single halfpenny rewards the trio.

Twenty minutes past Six.—A man leading a Newfoundland dog, with a monkey riding on its back. The man beats a big drum to attract attention. Somebody rises from the dinner table, throws a bone into the street to the dog, which speedily unhorses, or I ought perhaps to say undogs the monkey, and darts upon the prize in spite of the opposition and the kicks of his master. The monkey performs several little tricks—holds out its paw for halfpence, mounts and dismounts at word of command, but not until the dog has crunched the bone and made an end of it, with as much relish as if it were flesh; and is altogether so popular with the children and the servants, as to earn the price of a dinner for his owner. The monkey gets bits of cakes and apple from the children, the dog gets another bone, with a little meat on it, and the partnership of the man and two beasts, departs in peace; to amuse the children somewhere else.

Seven o'clock.—More mock niggers—seven of them. They sing Ben Bolt, Moggie Dooral, Little Maggie May, and others, which, I presume, are the popular favourites. A family just arrived—as is evident by the piles of boxes on the roof of the two cabs that carry them in detachments—and possibly fresh from the rural districts, where black minstrelsy is rarer than black swans, stand at the windows, and listen. To be seen listening is to be seen approving,

and to be seen approving means money. The minstrels are asked for the repetition of Little Maggie May, and, after compliance, receive what looks like half-a-crown, as it flashes from the window to the hat of the leader. Half-a-crown is not much among seven, though it is evidently a much more liberal gratuity than generally falls to the lot of street musicians, if an opinion may be formed from the expression that gleams on the sooty and greasy face of the recipient.

Half-past seven.—A barrel-organ. No policeman.

Eight o'clock—A woman, "clad in unwomanly rags," with a thin weak voice, dolefully chaunting Annie Laurie.

A quarter-past eight.—A barrel-organ. Policeman in the street, for a wonder; is told to expel this performer, and expels him accordingly. The man persists in grinding as he goes up the street to get out of it. "Leave off," says the policeman, sharply, and in the tone of a man that means mischief if he be thwarted; and the tune ceases. The policeman walks down the street, up again, and disappears; and in less than five minutes the organ fiend—for such this particularly pertinacious vagabond deserves to be called—re-enters the scene of his discomfiture, and begins to grind away triumphantly at the Old Hundredth Psalm. I suffer him, in an agony of spirit, for a full ten minutes. He meets no encouragement, and retires. May he grind organs in Pandemonium for ever and ever—amen!

Nine o'clock.—The tinkling of a guitar, well played, succeeded by the rich full voice, of a cultivated soprano, singing the old ballad, Comin' through the Rye. Here, at last is something worth hearing. Looking out I see a well dressed woman, with a small crowd around her. She next sings, Ye Banks and Braes o' Bonnie Doon, and renders it beautifully; afterwards, The Last Rose of Summer, equally well, followed by Bonnie Dundee, sung with a spirit which would do credit to any stage. This person is, I understand, a protégée of my landlady, and visits the street regularly every week. She meets otherwise with very considerable encouragement. She has sought, but hitherto in vain, to obtain an engagement at the music halls. "One reason is," she says, "that negro melodies and comic songs by ladies are more popular than Scotch songs, or than sentimental songs of any kind, unless they are sung by a man or a woman with a blackened face." Another reason, perhaps, is poverty, and the want of good introductions. My landlady says she is an honest girl and has been well enough educated to read music and sing at sight. Can nothing be done for her? I ask. "Many gentlemen," replies the landlady, "have been greatly pleased with her singing, and promised to exert themselves to get her an engagement of some kind, however humble, to take her out of street singing; but it has been all cry and no wool; and nothing has come of it."

A quarter to Ten o'clock.—A tremendous hullabaloo! and loud cries of "Awful murder! awful murder! Second edition—Second eddishon!" I send down to know what is the matter. It is a sell—a sell—a palpable sell—and no murder at all; and the servant brings me up a fly sheet, printed on one side, like the halfpenny ballads. This costs a penny; and is the story—I quote literally—of "A married man caught in a Trap, or, the Lovers Detected —a Laughable Dialogue, which took place in a Railway Carriage, between a married gentleman and a young lady in this town, which was overheard by a gentleman, who immediately committed the same to writing." The "laughable dialogue" is not at all laughable, but vapid, silly, puerile, and utterly contemptible. Compared with the vendors of such swindling rubbish, who disturb the night by their vociferous cries, the most villanous organ-grinder of Italy is a respectable man and a saint. If I had the making of the laws and the administration of them afterwards, I think such fellows as these would never be able to vociferate again, either on a false pretence or a true one, after they got out of my clutches.

The above is a fair and true account, and an unvarnished tale of a day's music and misery in London. The real music was not much; the real misery was very considerable. Is there no remedy for such wrong? Cannot a prohibitive duty be put upon Italians and Savoyards at the port of entry? Cannot music, or the murderers of music in the streets, by unauthorised performers be prevented? Or if the children and the servants, and the idle people generally, must have street music, cannot the infliction be concentrated within a couple of hours every day. People must not bathe in the Serpentine after eight in the morning; why should people be allowed to make hideous noises anywhere and everywhere in the business hours of the day?

BAGGAGE UNDER DIFFICULTIES.

We have most of us in our time suffered more or less from "Baggage." But it is not until the traveller leaves Europe, and gets beyond railways and civilisation that the real miseries of the incumbrance fairly set in. Worst of all do they become, if you travel with an army, especially if that army be in Abyssinia. The endless packing and unpacking, the nice adjustment and fastening of the baggage upon the mules, the numerous break downs upon the road, the incessant delays, and the obstinacy of the drivers, disposed me, when I was in these last mentioned circumstances, to curse my birthday.

Sometimes the duty of looking after baggage was more than an annoyance, for it was not unattended with danger. I had been stationed at Antalo, and one day received orders to go down to Senafe. Two or three other officers were also downward bound, and we decided upon journeying together. Above Antalo,

bands of the robber Gallas pervaded the whole country, and robbed our convoys whenever they saw an opportunity; sometimes openly attacking when the baggage guards were weak; but generally making a sudden rush, plundering the first mule or two and killing the muleteer if he attempted resistance. Many lives were lost in this manner, the Gallas suffering more than our men, for when our men were reasonably on their guard, they were always able to repel the robbers, often with considerable loss. Below Antalo, however, it was considered that the risk was small; a soldier of the Royal Engineers and a mule-driver had been killed, only a day or two before my journey; these were exceptional instances. The natives might and would plunder if they had an opportunity, and they might occasionally murder; but we had no fear of their attacking a numerous party, while the robber Gallas were in our rear, and we were leaving their country every day. The Gallas inhabit the mountain slopes to the east of Abyssinia proper, and the flat country between them and the sea; and it is only near Lake Ashangi that they occupy the plateau land upon the mountain tops. So it came to pass that we took no precaution for the defence of our baggage, frequently allowing it to go on alone, and merely directing the drivers and servants to keep together, and on no account to straggle. Generally, however, one or two of us kept near, simply because experience had taught us that the mules arrived very much earlier at their destination if we were there to urge them, or rather to urge the servants, on. It happened, thus, one morning, that I started alone with the baggage, my companions having some inquiries to make at the station which would detain them two or three hours. The baggage animals were nine in number, and we had five or six servants. With these I rode on for some hours across the plain, when I came upon a party of about twenty natives, who were sitting in a slight depression of the ground. Some seven or eight of them were men, the rest women and girls. They had with them three or four of the little donkeys of the country.

As we approached, the natives rose, and came up to me, exclaiming Gallas! Gallas! and pointing to the country around. They were evidently endeavouring to explain to me that there were Gallas in the neighbourhood. Now, I felt certain that there could be no Gallas within fifty miles, and consequently shook my head in sign of unbelief, and said, "Mafeesh Gallas." (Mafeesh, is I believe an Arabic word, but it is used throughout Abyssinia, and is a general negative; nowhere, none, not, no, are all expressable by Mafeesh. The natives for instance when they heard of Theodore's death, came up to us and drew their hands across their throats, crying in an interrogative tone, "Têdres Mafeesh?" If you inquired for any article which the natives did not possess the answer was "Mafeesh.") The natives were clamorous in the reiteration of their assertion: "Gallas! Gallas! Gallas!" They then by signs demanded if they might accompany me. To this I assented, although perfectly incredulous about the Gallas. Had I had the smallest belief in the existence of a band of these robbers in the neighbourhood, I should have halted until my friends came up, and could then have proceeded in safety, four Englishmen armed with revolvers being a match for any number of Gallas. Having no belief whatever in the matter I rode on.

At the end of half a mile, one of the natives again came up to my side, and pointing to a ruined village a little ahead, and sixty or seventy yards from the road side, again said very significantly "Gallas!" I rode on, but was checked suddenly by the apparition of some forty or fifty armed natives emerging from the village, and moving across to intercept our march. They were Gallas indeed; there was no mistaking their white robes, which are whiter than and worn in a different fashion from those of the Abyssinians. I confess that I was horribly alarmed. Two or three of us might have made a successful stand, but it was hopeless for one man to do so, if it came to fighting, especially as several of them were armed with guns, and all the rest with shield and spear.

It was useless to think of flight, or I should have given the order instantly. The Gallas would have overtaken the heavily laden mules before they could have gone fifty yards.

There was nothing for it but to put a bold face on the matter. Three of my servants were armed: two with spears, and the third with a sword. They were all Goa men, who, however courageous they might be, would have been utterly useless in a fight, for they are physically one of the weakest races even in India. I told them to keep close by me, and on no account to use their weapons unless I fired, for we must be overpowered if it came to blows. I then drew my revolver and rode up to the head of the baggage. I had still some hopes that they would not attack when they saw an officer with the baggage, and therefore, when I got close to them, I waved my hand for them to let us pass. Their only answer was to draw closer across the road, and I now presented my pistol and repeated my sign to them to clear the way. Their reply was a rush upon the mules; the chief himself, a worthy in a brocaded dress and armed with a rifle, seizing the head of the leading animal. Another minute, and every load would have been off; the only hope lay in Bounce, so throwing my reins to a groom, and jumping from my horse, I had the astonished chief tight by the throat before he knew what I was about. For a moment he struggled to free himself, but a native is a child in the hands of an Englishman of average strength, especially when the Englishman knows that his life is at stake. A severe shake and the exhibition of my revolver to his head soon quieted him. In the mean time the other Gallas rushed up, but the muzzle of my pistol kept them from coming to close quarters. Naturally I am a peaceful man, but upon the same principle that a sheep

driven into a corner by a dog will stand at bay, I faced the Gallas, and I believed even concealed from them that I was not at all at my ease. In the mean time my men were lungeing away with their spears, but fortunately without effect, for the Gallas easily parried their thrusts. I shouted to them to be quiet, for that if they wounded any one we should all be killed to a certainty. The chief now gasped out, "Soultain, taib:" "Soultan," or master, being the term they all apply to the English, and "taib" signifying good.

"It is all very well to say 'Soultan, taib,'" I replied, he not in the slightest degree understanding my words: "order your men to leave my mules alone."

My gestures, and the threatening proximity of the pistol, enlightened him as to my country's language; and, seeing that I was thoroughly in earnest, he did order the men to leave the mules alone. This, however, they hesitated considerably about doing; and it was only after much talk, and a considerable pointing of the revolver, of which they have a great horror, that they let go the animals, and I directed my men to drive on at once. I now saw that all danger was over, and that the Gallas, although ready enough to plunder — as their experience had taught them they could with impunity when not absolutely caught in the act—were yet very unwilling to shed blood, or to injure an officer; the punishment which had fallen upon Theodore, having taught them a rather striking lesson. They have a great national respect for their own lives, besides.

But I determined to prevent, if possible, the unfortunate girls and women, whom they had already seized, from being carried off. The Gallas are slavetraders, and the fate of these poor creatures would have been terrible. I therefore went back, and insisted on their being given up. To this there was great demur. "The soultan was taib," they said, "but these people were not soultans." I replied by pointing to myself, and saying, "Soultan," and then patting the women on their heads, and pointing to the road, to show that they were travelling with me. I had, however, harder work than in recovering the baggage. A hostile group gathered round me, but the chief interfered; and I could gather from his looks and gestures that he was warning them that assuredly vengeance would be taken if they killed an officer. He pointed to my revolver, too, and held up his fingers, showing that it had six barrels; lastly, he pointed to the women with contempt, and then to the villages round, as much as to say, "Why run all this risk for these creatures, when you can get as many as you like anywhere?" This argument settled the business, and, with many exchanges of taib, we parted and proceeded on our respective ways, my party with no greater loss than that of four or five native donkeys, which had been carried off at the commencement of the row. Thus I came out of it, like a hero—to all external appearance—and with the rescued women kissing my boots, as if I had performed prodigies of valour.

A HARD ROAD TO TRAVEL.

It was part of the ineffable system of sweetness and light known as the wisdom of our ancestors, to whip up the children on the morning of Innocents' Day, "in order that the memorial of Herod's murder might stick the closer." The wisdom of our contemporaries, while it has discarded the brutal practice of annually reacting the Massacre of the Innocents on a secondary scale, still retains a trace of the disagreeable mediæval custom, in respect of the strict connexion maintained in many households between Biblical study and afflictive punishment, and the intimate alliance between chapters from Jeremiah to be gotten by heart, and bread and water and dark cupboards. Who the philanthropic discoverer of child-torture as a prelude to a church festival may have been, is uncertain; perhaps he was a near relative of the bright spirit who hit on the ingenious devices—to which the puddling of iron and the glazing of pottery are but trifling puerilities—of confining black beetles in walnut shells and binding them over the eyes of infants; or of that ardent lover of his species—connected with the educational profession—whose researches into the phenomena of physical pain led him to the inestimable discovery that by boring a hole, or any number of holes, in a piece of wood with which a child's hand is struck, a corresponding number of blisters may be raised on the smitten palm.

Our good ancestors—can we ever be sufficiently grateful for the rack, or for the whirligig chair framed by medical wisdom for the treatment of acute mania!—blended the Innocents' Day custom with many of the observances of social life. If they were wicked, these ancestors of ours, they were at least waggish in their wickedness. If the boundaries of a parish or the limits of an estate needed accurate record, they laid down a boy on the ascertained frontiers, and flogged him so soundly that he never forgot where the parish of St. Verges ended, or where that of St. Brooms began. Fifty years afterwards, if he were summoned as a witness at Nisi Prius, he would relate, quickened by the memory of his stripes, every topographical condition of the land under discussion. The phantom of this sportive mode of combining cruelty with land surveying yet survives in the annual outings of charity children to "beat the bounds." Formerly the charity boys and not the bounds were beaten; but now the long willow wands with which bricks and mortar are castigated, are falling into desuetude, and although the ceremony is still kept up in some parishes—the rector in his black gown, and a chimney-pot hat, and bearing a large nosegay in his hand, being a sight to see—it is feared that beating the bounds will, in a few years, be wholly abolished, owing to the gradual but sure extinction of

Beadles, as a race. Another vestige of what may be called Innocenticism lingered until recently in certain pleasant municipal excursions termed "swanhoppings," when some corpulent gentlemen with a considerable quantity of lobster salad and champagne beneath their waistcoats, were habitually seized upon by the watermen of the Lord Mayor's barge, and "bumped" on posts or rounded blocks of stone. The solemn usage had some reference, it is to be presumed, to the liberties of the City, as guaranteed by the charter given by William the King to William the bishop, and Godfrey the portreeve. Or it might obscurely have related to the Conservancy of the Thames. Substantially, it meant half-a-crown to the Lord Mayor's watermen.

In the south of France, there may be found growing, all the year round, as fine a crop of ignorance and fanaticism as the sturdiest Conservative might wish to look upon. The populace of Toulouse would hang the whole Calas family again to-morrow if they had a chance. The present writer was all but stoned last summer at Toulon for not going down on his knees in the street, in honour of the passage of an absurd little joss, preceded by a brass band, a drum-major, a battalion of the line, and a whole legion of priests. The country people still thrash their children mercilessly whenever a gang of convicts go by on their way to the bagne, and, especially on the morning of the execution of a criminal. And it is a consolation to arrive at the conclusion, from patent and visible facts, that wherever wisdom, in its ancestral form, triumphantly flourishes, there dirt, sloth, ignorance, superstition, fever, pestilence, and recurring famines, do most strongly flourish too.

It may seem strange to the reader that, after venturing upon these uncomplimentary comments on our forefathers' sagacity, the writer should candidly proceed to own his belief that the human memory *may* be materially strengthened as to facts and dates, by the impressions of bodily anguish suffered concurrently with a particular day or a particular event. Such, however, is the fact, although, of course, it cannot be accepted as a plea in extenuation of the most barbarous cruelty. For example, if the next time a tramp sought hospitality at the Guildford union, the guardians forthwith seized upon such tramp, and caused him to be branded with a hot iron from head to foot, and in Roman capitals, with the words, "The guardians of the Guildford union refuse to relieve the casual poor," the stigmatised vagrant would, to the day of his death, remember that Guildford union workhouse was not a place whereat bed and breakfast should be asked for. Still there is no combating the fact that the remembrances of agony are lasting. I have a very indistinct recollection of things which took place twenty, or even ten years ago; and I often ask myself with amazement whether it is possible that I could ever have written such and such a letter, or known such a man or woman. Yet with microscopic minuteness, I can recall a yellow hackney-coach—the driver had a carbuncle on the left side of his nose—which, once upon a time, conveyed my nurse and myself to the residence of a fashionable dentist in Old Cavendish-street, London. I can remember the black footman who opened the door, and the fiendish manner in which he grinned, as though to show that *his* molars needed no dentistry. I can remember the dog's-eared copy of the Belle-Assemblée on the waiting-room table; the widow lady with her face tied up, moaning by the window; the choleric old gentleman in nankeen trousers who swore terrifically because he was kept waiting; the frayed and threadbare edges of the green baize door leading to the dentist's torture chamber; the strong smell of cloves and spirits of wine and warm wax, about; the dentist himself, his white neckcloth and shining bald head; his horrible apparatus; his more horrible morocco-covered chair; the drip, drip of water at the washstand; the sympathising looks of my nurse; the deadly dew of terror that started from my pores as the monster seized me; and, finally, that one appalling circular wrench, as though some huge bear with red hot jaws—he has favoured us all, in dreams—were biting my head off, and found my cervical vertebræ troublesome: all these came back to me, palpably. Yet I had that tooth out, five and thirty years ago.

A hard road to travel! I should have forgotten all about *that* road by this time but for the intolerable pain I endured when I was travelling upon it. I have crossed Mont Cenis a dozen times, yet I should be puzzled to point out the principal portions of the landscape to a stranger. I could not repeat, without book, the names of the Rhine castles between Cologne and Mayence. I am sure I don't know how many stations there are between London and Brighton. And I am not by any means "letter" or "figure perfect" in the multiplication table, although the road up to nine times eight was in my time about as hard travelling as could be gone through by a boy with a skin not quite so thick as that of a rhinoceros. But every inch of the hard road I happened to travel in the spring of 1864—a road which stretches for some three hundred miles from the city of Vera Cruz to the city of Mexico—is indelibly impressed on my memory. Since then, I have journeyed many thousands of miles over roads of more or less duresse; and in the Tyrol, in Venetia, in Spain, in Algeria, I have often tested by sudden inward query the strength remaining in the reminiscence of that road in Mexico. You turn to the right from the great quay of Vera Cruz, passing the castle of San Juan de Alloa. You drive to a wretched railway station, and take the train (I am speaking of 1864) to a place called La Soledad, some five-and-twenty miles inland. There you sleep. Next morning at daybreak you start in a carriage along the great Spanish highway, and by nightfall make Cordova. At four A.M. on the following morning you drive to Orizaba—you are taking things

quietly, mind, in consequence of the road—and pass the day there. Again you start at four A.M. from Cordova for Sant' Augustin del Palmar, where you dine and sleep. The next day's journey brings you, by sunset, to Puebla. On the next day you make Rio Frio in time for breakfast, and at about five in the afternoon you pass the Garita, and you are in the city of Montezuma in the capital of Mexico. That is the road. I spent, going up, six days on the journey; but I was an inmate of a private carriage. I came down again in a public diligence, in three days; but, for reasons I shall explain afterwards, the agony of the private travelling carriage far surpassed that of the stage-coach.

Ostensibly I had no reason for grumbling, I was the guest of a kind friend whose carriage had been built in New York with a special view to Mexican highways, and who, being a great friend and patron of the contractor for the Imperial Diligences—Mexico was an empire in '64—was certain of relays of mules all the way from the sea coast to the capital. We had a good store of wine with us, and plenty of Havana cigars; and in the way of edibles the commissariat of Mexico is as abundant as that of Old Spain is meagre.* The route was singularly clear from highway robbers at that time; the French being in force at Cordova, Orizaba, and Puebla, and patrolling every league of the way, not only with their own dragoons, but with local levies known as contra-guerilleros. Finally, we had taken the precaution of leaving behind us in safe care at Vera Cruz, our watches, gold "ounces," and other valuables, keeping only a few loose dollars for the expenses of the journey. I even left my clothes and servant on the coast, and during the six weeks I remained in Mexico city was not only boarded and lodged, but washed and clothed by my generous host: even to the articles of purple and fine linen, lapis-lazuli wrist-buttons, a Mexican hat as broad as a brougham wheel, and a pair of spurs with rowels as big as cheese-plates. So, if we had been robbed on the way, the guerillas would have found very little of which to plunder us. The pain, the misery, the wretchedness I endured, almost without intermission for six days—at night you generally dreamed of your bumps, and suffered all your distresses over again—were entirely due to the abominable road upon which we entered, for our sins, at La Soledad, and which we did not leave until we came to the very custom-house barrier of Mexico. Twelve years have passed since I travelled on the Czar's Highway and found it bad. I have waded through the Virginian mud since then; have made acquaintance with muleback on the banks of the Guadalquiver; have tried a camel (for a very short time), at Oran. But I can conscientiously declare that I never found so hard a road to travel as that road between Vera Cruz and Mexico, and I am confident that, were I to live to sixty years of age (the Mexican railway by that time being completed and paying fifteen per cent on its stock, and a beautifully Macadamised carriage road running beside it for three hundred miles) and I were questioned as to what the Mexican highway was like in 1864, I should, on the "beating the bounds" principle, preserve as lively a remembrance of its horrors as I preserve of it now, a peaceable and contented daily traveller on the North-London and South-Western railways.

Had I not been somewhat obtuse, I might have noticed on board the steamer which brought us from Havana, that my friend was nervous, even to uneasiness, as to the form my earliest impressions of Mexican travelling might assume. I must expect to rough it a little, he remarked. I answered that I had tried an American ambulance waggon, and a M'Clellan saddle, and that I could not imagine anything rougher than those aids to locomotion. "Our roads are not quite up to the mark of Piccadilly," he would hint sometimes. "You see, since the French came to attack Juarez, everything has been knocked into a cocked hat." However, he always wound up his warnings by declaring that we shouldn't find a single robber on the road, and that we should go up to Mexico, "like a fiddle." If the state in which I eventually reached Mexico, bore any resemblance to the musical instrument in question, it must have been akin to that of the fiddle of the proprietor of the bear in Hudibras, warped and untuned, with my bow broken, a fracture in my stomach, another in my back, and my strings flying all abroad.

I sincerely hope that I shall never see Vera Cruz again, the ill-omened, sweltering, sandy, black, turkey-buzzard-haunted home of yellow fever! I shall not forget, however, that I was hospitably entertained there, and especially I shall never lose consciousness of a long telescope in the saloon overlooking the roadstead, to which I am indebted for one of the drollest scenes I ever saw in my life. There were three or four French men-of-war stationed at Vera Cruz at the time, but they could not lie in the harbour, which is not by any means landlocked, and has but an insufficient breakwater in the castle of San Juan de Alloa. The Spithead of Vera Cruz is off Sacrificios, a place which owes its name to the horrible human sacrifices perpe-

* It is curious that in countries where wine is plentiful there should be nothing procurable to eat, and that in non-wine-growing, but beer or cider-producing countries, the traveller should always be sure of a good dinner. Out of the beaten track in Italy, a tourist runs the risk of being half starved. In Spain, he *is* starved habitually and altogether; but he is sure of victuals in England, in America, and in Russia. Even in the East, fowls, eggs, kids, and rice are generally obtainable in the most out of the way places: but many a time have I been dismissed hungry from a village hostelry in France with the cutting remark: "Monsieur, nous n'avons plus rien." There is an exception to the rule in Germany—I except Prussia—which bounteous land runs over with wine, beer, beef, veal, black and white bread, potatoes, salad, and sauerkraut.

trated there up to the time of Cortes' invasion. Sunday being the Frenchman's day of joyous recreation all over the world, leave had been granted, with some liberality, to the crews of the war ships in port; and from our window we had seen, during the morning and afternoon, numerous parties of gallant French Jack-tars—they are so picturesquely dandified in appearance, that they more closely resemble patent blacking than common tar—swaggering along the strand, peeping under the mantillas of the women, kissing their hands to tawny old Indian dames smoking their papelitos in shadowy doorways, and occasionally singing and skipping, through mere joyousness of heart and exuberance of spirits. Many of the men-o'-wars men were negroes from the Mauritius, and it was very pleasant to remark that their colour did not in the least interfere with their being hail-fellow-well-met with the white seamen. But you would very rarely see an American and a black foremast-man arm-in-arm. These fine fellows of the Imperial French navy had, I hope, attended service at the cathedral in the morning; but, as day wore on, they had certainly patronised the aguardiente shops with great assiduity; and spirituous intoxication, following, perhaps, on a surfeit of melons, shaddocks, and pineapples, in a tropical climate, is not very good for the health. Touching at St. Thomas's, once, I said inquiringly to the captain of the mail steamer, "And this is the white man's grave, is it?" "No," he answered, "*that* is," and he pointed to a brandy-bottle on the cabin-table.

I don't think I ever saw so many tipsy tars as I did that Sunday at Vera Cruz. Portsmouth, with a squadron just in from a long cruise, was a temperance hotel compared with this tropical town. It is difficult to repress a smile when one is told that Frenchmen never get tipsy. All that I have seen of French soldiers and sailors on active service, leads me to the persuasion that they will drink as much as they can get; and in their cups they are inexpressibly mischievous, and not unfrequently very savage. Yet, although rowdy, insolent, and quarrelsome, they rarely fall to fisticuffs, as our men do.* On this particular Sunday they so frightened Vera Cruz from its propriety—the inhabitants being mainly an abstemious race, suffering from chronic lowness of spirits, in consequence of civil war and the yellow fever—that pickets of infantry were sent out from the main guard to pick up inebriated mariners and pack them off on board ship again. The French are very quick at adapting themselves to the usages of the country they visit, and, short as was the time they had been in Mexico, they had learnt the use of that wonderfully serviceable instrument, the lasso. The pickets, wearing only their side arms, went about lassoing tipsy sailors right and left, most scientifically; and after they had caught their men in running nooses, they "coralled them"—that is to say, they would encircle a whole group of nautical bacchanalians with a thin cord, which, being drawn tight, the whole body of revellers would be drawn close together. Then, the pickets would, with mild applications of their sheathed bayonets, astern, run the captives down to the waterside, and tumble them into the boats which were to convey them on board their respective ships.

This afternoon's entertainment had continued for some time; and the last boat-load of topers having been despatched, Vera Cruz was once more left to the blazing sunshine, to silence, to the black scavenger buzzards, and to me. My hosts were all in their hammocks (slung in the corridor), enjoying their siesta. I could not sleep, and bethought me of the long brass telescope on a tripod in the balcony. I got the lens adjusted to my sight at last, and made out the castle of San Juan; the tricoloured flag idly drooping from the staff on the tower; the shining black muzzles of the cannon, looking out of the embrasures of the bastions, like savage, yet sleepy mastiffs blinking from their kennels; the sentinel, with a white turban round his shako, pacing up and down; the bright bayonet on his rifle throwing off sparkling rays. But beyond the castle, some two miles distant, there was nothing to see. Sacrificios and the squadron were "round the corner," so to speak, and out of my field of view. The native craft were all moored in shore; and Vera Cruz is not a place where you go out pleasure-boating. There was nothing visible beyond the arid, dusty foreshore, but the excruciatingly bright blue sky and the intolerably bright blue sea: Jove raining down one canopy of molten gold over the whole, as though he thought that Danaë was bathing somewhere in those waters. I fell a musing over poor Alexander Smith's

All dark and barren as a rainy sea.

The barrenness here was as intense; but it was from brightness. You looked upon a liquid desert of Sahara. Ah! what is that? A dark speck midway between the shore and the horizon. The tiniest imaginable speck. I shift the telescope, try again, and again focus my speck. It grows, it intensifies, it IS, with figures large as life, so it seems, finished with Dutch minuteness, full of colour, light, and shade, colour animation, a picture that gross Jan Steen, that Hogarth, that Callot, might have painted. A boat crammed full of tipsy sailors. There is one man who feels very unwell, and who, grasping his ribs with either hand, grimaces over the gunwale in a most pitiable manner. Another is argumentatively drunk, and is

* You will find, in Algeria, at the military penitentiaries, "disciplinary battalions," formed almost entirely of incorrigible drunkards. The excesses committed by the French in Mexico, and which were generally induced by libations of aguardiente or commissariat brandy, were atrocious; in fact, they bore out, as a rule, the reputation given them by the Duke of Wellington in his evidence before the Royal Commission on Military Punishments. See LIBERTY, EQUALITY, FRATERNITY, AND MUSKETRY, in Household Words, 1851. Five out of ten soldiers who massacred the citizens of Paris on the boulevards in the December of that year, were drunk.

holding forth to a staid quartermaster, who is steering. Another is harmoniously intoxicated. Then there is a man who is in a lachrymose state of liquor, and is probably bewailing La Belle France and his Mother. Suddenly a negro, who is mad drunk, tries to jump overboard. Such a bustle, such a commotion! They get the obstreperous black man down and lay him in the sheets, and he, too begins to sing. It is as though you were a deaf man *looking* at the "propos des buveurs," in Rabelais. And in the midst of all this the boat with its stolid sober rowers goes pitching and bounding about the field of the telescope, sometimes swerving quite out of it, and leaving but a blank brightness; then, coming into full focus again, in all its wondrous detail of reality.

After a night not entirely unembittered by the society of mosquitoes, we rose, took the conventional cup of chocolate, crust of dry bread, and glass of cold water, and, bidding farewell to our entertainers, drove to the railway terminus. I didn't expect much from a railway point of view, and consequently was not disappointed. We have all heard of things being rough and ready. There was plenty of roughness here, without the readiness. It was nearly noon, and the industrial staff of the station, represented by two Indians in striped blankets (serving them for coat, vest, and pantaloons), and monstrous straw hats, were sleeping in two handbarrows. The station-master, a creole Spaniard, had slung his grass hammock in a shady nook behind the pay-place, and was sleeping the sleep of the just. There was a telegraph office, recently established by the French; and the operator, with his face resting on his arms, and those limbs resting on the bran-new mahogany instrument from Paris, snored peacefully. It was the most primitive station imaginable. There was one passenger waiting for the train, a half-caste Mexican, fast asleep at full length on the floor, and with his face prone to it. He had a bag of Indian corn with him, on which, for safety, he lay; and he had brought a great demi-pique saddle too, which rested on his body, the stirrup leathers knotted together over the pummel, and which looked like a bridge over the river Lethe. Where was his horse? I wondered. Did he own one, or had his gallant steed been shot under him in battle, and was he on his way to steal another? Altogether, this ricketty ruinous railway station, with the cacti growing close to the platform; and with creepers twining about every post and rafter, and bits of brick, and stray scaffold-poles, and fragments of matting, and useless potsheds, and coils of grass rope littered about in the noontide glare; reminded me with equal force, of an Aztec building speculation overtaken by bankruptcy, and of a tropical farmyard in which all the live stock had died of yellow fever.

The time for the train to start had long expired; but there was no hurry; so my travelling companion lay down with his head on the half-caste's saddle and took a little nap. I wandered on to the platform, and there, to my pleasurable surprise, found one man who was awake. Who but a French gendarme? One of a picked detachment of that admirable force sent out to Mexico to keep both invaders and invaded in order—combed, brushed, polished, waxed, pomatumed, booted, spurred, sabred, belted, cocked hatted, gauntletted, medalled—a complete and perfect gendarme. He was affable, sententious and dogmatic. "Mexico," he observed, "was a country without hope." I have since inclined to the belief that the gendarme did not dogmatise quite unreasonably on this particular head. He further remarked that discipline must be maintained, and that in view of that necessity he had usually administered "une fameuse volée," in the shape of blows with the flat of his sword, to the station-master. He accepted a cigar, to be reserved for the time of his relief from duty; and not to be behind hand in politeness, he favoured me with a pinch of snuff from a box bearing on the lid the enamelled representation of a young lady in her shirt sleeves and a pair of black velvet trousers dancing a jig of a carnavalesque type. "I adore the theatre," said the gendarme. "Monsieur has no doubt seen La Belle Hélène in Paris?" I replied that I had witnessed the performance of that famous extravaganza. "Ah!" continued the gendarme, with something like a sigh. "They essayed it at Mauritius; but it obtained only a success of esteem. Monsieur may figure to himself the effect of a Belle Hélène who was a mulatto. As for 'Agamemnon,' he did not advance at all. J'aurais bien flanqué trois jours de salle de police à ce gredin là? I intend, Monsieur," he concluded, "to visit the Bouffés, and to assist at a representation of the work of M. Jacques Offenbach, when I reimpatriate myself and enter the civil." Honest gendarme! I hope the Vomito spared him, and that he has reimpatriated himself by this time, and seen, not only La Belle Hélène but Orphée aux Enfers and la Grande Duchesse de Gerolstein.

The station-master woke up about one o'clock, and it appeared that he had sent a messenger down into the town to ask my friend at what time he would like to have the train ready. There was no other passenger save the half-caste, who would very cheerfully have waited until the day after next, or the week after next, or the Greek kalends. My friend said he thought we might as well start at once, so half a dozen Indians were summoned from outhouses where they had been dozing, and we proceeded to a shed, and picked out the most comfortable carriage in the rolling stock, which was but limited. We found a "car" at last, of the American pattern, open at either end, but with cane-bottomed instead of stuffed seats, and Venetian blinds to the windows. The engine, also, presently came up puffing and sweating to remind us of a fact which had, at least, slipped my memory—that we were living in the nineteenth and not in the ninth century; a locomotive of the approved American model; blunderbuss funnel; "cowcatcher" in front; penthouse in rear for the driver; warning bell over the

boiler, and "Asa Hodge and Co., Pittsburg, Pa." embossed on a plate on the "bogey" frame. Everything in this country which in mechanical appliances can remind you of civilisation, comes from the United States. New York is to Mexico as Paris is to Madrid.

The machine had an Indian stoker, and uncommonly like a gnome, or a kobold, or some other variety of the demon kind did that Indian look, with his coppery skin powdered black with charcoal dust, and his grimy blanket girt around him with a fragment of grass-rope. But the engine-driver was a genuine Yankee—in a striped jacket and a well-worn black satin vest—a self-contained man, gaunt, spare, mahogany-visaged, calm, collected, and expectoratory, with that wonderful roving Down-East eye, which always seems to be looking out for something to patent and make two hundred and fifty thousand dollars by. But for the Mexican hat which he had donned, and the revolver which he wore conspicuously in his belt, you might have taken him for a law-abiding manufacturer of patent clothes wringers or mowing machines, from Hartford or Salem. He "passed the time of day" to us very civilly, and confirmed the good news that there were no guerrilleros on the road. "The French have fixed up a whole crowd of 'em about Puebla," he said, "and they don't care about being hung up by the score, like hams round a stove pipe. I ain't been shot at for a month, and I've loaned my Sharp's rifle to a man that's gone gunning down to the Cameroons."

The long car we had selected was attached to the locomotive, and a luggage van coupled to that, in which a fatigue party of French soldiers who had just marched into the station placed a quantity of commissariat stores for the detachment on duty at La Soledad. We got under weigh, but, the line being single, were temporarily shunted on to a siding: the telegraph having annouuced the coming in of a train from the interior.

A few minutes afterwards there rumbled into the station a long string of cars, which, disgorging their contents, the platform became thronged with, at least, five hundred men; stranger arrivals by an excursion train I never saw. The strangers were mostly tall athletic fellows, clean limbed, and with torsos like to that of the Farnese Hercules. Noble specimens of humanity: and every man of them as black as the ace of spades. They were in slave-dealers parlance—now, happily a dead language—"full grown buck-niggers." They were uniformly clad, in loose jerkins, vests, and knickerbockers of spotless white linen; and their ebony heads—many of them very noble and commanding in expression, straight noses and well-chiselled lips being far from uncommon—were bound with snowy muslin turbans. These five hundred men, shod with sandals of untanned hide, armed with musket and bayonet, and the short heavy Roman "tuck" or stabbing sword, and carrying their cartouch boxes in front of them, formed a battalion of that noted Nubian force, of whom there were three regiments altogether, hired from the Viceroy of Egypt by the French government for service in Mexico. They had come down from La Soledad to reinforce the wasting garrison of Vera Cruz, of which the European portion were dying of Vomito like sheep of the rot. The sergeants and corporals were black; but the commissioned officers were Egyptian Arabs, sallow, weazened, undersized creatures in braided surtouts of blue camlet, and red fez caps. They compared very disadvantageously with the athletic and symmetrically built negroes.

These Nubians, my friend the gendarme told me, were good soldiers, so far as fighting went, but irreclaimable scoundrels. They were horribly savage, and jabbered some corrupted dialect with Arabic for its base, but Mumbo Jumbo for its branches, and which their own officers could scarcely understand. The system by which discipline was preserved among them had been beautifully simplified. If a Nubian soldier didn't do what he was told, his officer, for the first offence, fell to kicking him violently. If he persisted in his disobedience, the officer drew his sabre, and cut him down.

Think of a Mahomedan pasha letting out his two thousand pagan negroes to a Roman Catholic emperor, in order that he might coerce the Spanish and Red Indian population of an American republic into recognising the supremacy of an Austrian archduke!

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AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A SMALL BOY.

IN FIVE CHAPTERS. IV. THE COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION.

THE drawing-room on that morning—that room was to be the scene of the struggle—had been partially cleared. A small table in the centre, with pens, ink, and so forth, imparting a general official air of execution, with three chairs in a row, exactly in front. Beyond were seats for the spectators. On the neighbouring table were biscuits and golden sherry. I well remember that to my astonishment I was encouraged by warm embraces, and bidden not to to be afraid and to do my best, and that was all that could be expected. No one could do more. I was likewise told that I had worked hard and "been a very good boy of late." A more appreciable incitement, and one which seemed to me to have far more logic in it, was the private administering of a glass of sherry, an unfrequent luxury lest I should contract low tastes for drinking. This reviver was thrown in just a few seconds before the expected knock was heard below. It had the best effect. I was ready for the contest. I was also in my best clothes. Blue jacket, gilt buttons, pink ribbon round my neck, tied by female hands. Even Miss Simpson was kindly.

They were coming up-stairs; Mr. Goodman leading: a tall red-faced gentleman, long since retired from the army where he had hectored his men; he had now only his wife and "my two boys, sir," to hector. I had often met him with a stick on his shoulder, and he had looked on those occasions as if he would like to hector *me* also. He came in first in the procession. Mrs. Goodman was a quiet lady, with a chirruping voice, very gentle, but full of pride about "our boys." The gladiators themselves came last; they had eager eyes, and were impatient. The elder and taller, William, having, it seemed to our family, an insufferably *thoughtful* air, interpreted as confident assurance of victory. It had the corresponding effect of depression on me—Arthur, smaller in height, was a mean contemptible adversary. Mr. Blackstone was already on the ground, engaged in easy conversation with the ladies of the family. I almost think he had a new frock-coat for the occasion—certainly he wore the best and shiniest of his wardrobe. There was a suppressed agitation in his manner, his voice was very low. The whole family were present, with the addition of a female friend—elderly—who, from the presence of the sherry and adjoining cake, seemed to look on the whole as something festival like, or after the manner of an early tea-party.

Places were now taken with much rustling. The three combatants were grouped together in the centre; the spectators made an awful circus round. Mr. Blackstone opened the first of the volumes for examination, which lay in a decent heap beside him; before him was a neatly ruled and graduated scheme made out in departments and cells, on which to record the answering. He had half a dozen newly made pens beside him—in case of a crisis. He opened the first volume of Adam's Roman Antiquities, and began with me. The other works selected were:

Alvarez Prosody.
The Latin Grammar.
The Greek Grammar.
The First Book of Virgil.
The First Book of Homer.
The First Book of Euclid.

The first gun was directed against me: "When was the catapult first used?" A question answered triumphantly, for mechanics were my weakness, and I had often tried to construct what seemed to resemble that engine of war. Down went a mark for me. Arthur came next: "Who were the first Decemvirs?" There was a pause, decently long, to give him time to reflect; but no information could be elicited. But William was eager, and before Mr. Blackstone's eye was turned to him, the answer was out. We had twenty rounds in Adam's Antiquities, and at the close Mr. Blackstone "totted up" his marks, and in a low impressive voice read out the result:

Sidney 18
William 15
Arthur 12

At this cheering news the delighted faces of our family were turned to each other. The female friend, who had small decency, audibly congratulated the head of our family: glancing at the same time at the far off sherry, as though this were a proper opportunity to introduce it. But Mr. Goodman's stick descended impatiently on the floor, and he shifted himself uneasily in his chair. His face assumed a savage tone. "Mind

what you are about, sir," he said hoarsely to his eldest; "you are answering very carelessly."

A short pause and the second round began; Alvarez Prosody. Here again I went ahead. At the close of the poll we stood:

Sidney 15
William 13
Arthur 12

Mr. Goodman was growing black as night;—"Come here to me, sir," he called to his eldest born, "I want to speak to you." He had him over in the window; by the face of the youth when he returned—Mr. Goodman affecting to be interested about a coach-house opposite—it was rendered evident that a communication of a very threatening sort had passed. Then we began again, Virgil this time; the classics were my weak point, and, as I was to find, the Goodmans strong one. Almost at once I fell into bogs and quagmires, with the two enemies indecently eager to snatch the passage from me. The instant there was hesitation, they had opened full mouthed, the words bursting out together. "Ille se jactet in aulâ," Mr. Blackstone was saying, "reflect, Sidney, a moment, take time." "Let him throw it about," I was beginning. The other two with the words in their mouths, and mistaking a motion of Mr. Blackstone's face for a signal, had burst out with "Let him boast away." Now, to me had occurred this very word: and as the mark went down for *them*, with a flushed face and hostile voice, I roared out: "It ain't fair; they won't give me time." The head of our family here made protest gently, yet under sense of injury, "I do think if Sidney *had more time* and were not so flurried—really I think that last answer, — he *might* have——its scarcely fair."

Mr. Goodman's stick had been dancing up and down restlessly on our carpet between his knees. "I don't know, ma'am—you know a miss is a miss—and if William knows the answer——"

Mr. Blackstone was in an awkward position, but he had a strong sense of duty. "The answer must go," he said, a little falteringly, "to William's credit; but in future you must not answer till I tell you."

We then proceeded with the conflict. I do not like to linger over the details of the day, whose anniversary for long afterwards was always painful. I have to own to being defeated by a small majority by the elder youth, and to defeating the younger by a great one—a poor compensation. The state of the poll was declared by Mr. Blackstone about four o'clock, after an interval of miserable suspense, during which he went over his calculations several times. Amid breathless silence he read out the result:

William 136
Sidney 120
Arthur 94

Then the cake and wine were served. The unconcealed manifestations of elation on the part of the Goodmans were so many stabs to our family. For the wine or for the cake I had no stomach. *They* had, and gobbled and drank. There was some admirable acting on both sides, but from that hour there was a vendetta between the families. Until they left the house in triumph, I anticipated the worst. The instant the sound of the hall-door closing fell on our ears—they took away Mr. Blackstone to dine—I surely counted on the arm of justice being promptly extended, and the signal given for the lictors to drag me off. My face was already composing itself to an expression of defiance and dogged braving out the worst. I heard a quiet remonstrance: "I thought you knew your business—you told us so, or you would not have had this mortification. Well? How do you account for this?" How could I account for this? As well account for the tides. Was this a charge—was there going to be a court-martial, drum-head, the cat, and the rest of it? After the mortification of the day, and the bitter degradation, why put the poor Pariah to the question? My face was swelling, my lips were growing negro-like, a general dogged air was coming on. O the world! I thought. Let me die, run away, anything but lead this life; and these thoughts rushing and swelling up tumultuously, the tears burst out, and I began to roar and bellow. To my surprise, I was folded in loving arms; others tears commingled with mine; a soothing voice comforted me; gentle arms enfolded the unsuccessful sinner; a kind voice bade me, in compassionate terms, to be of good heart, and "not mind it," and "that I should go to the horsemanship to-morrow night," and so we commingled our tears. That moment was the first awakening, the first presence of grace and reformation.

CHAPTER V. FIRST LOVE.

The first party I ever attended was a remarkable festival. It was of humble dimensions, but it seemed to me then, more glorious than the most official ball I ever attended since. It brightened the whole prospect between. It glorified it into a too limited age of enchantment. I could talk of nothing else. The tailors and milliners devoted to my department of decoration were called in; and I was even allowed the exercise of my private taste in the selection of the various adornments. Indeed, it is only justice to mention that this indication on my part was held to be a sign of grace that deserved all encouragement — a token of civilisation; and orders went forth that any reasonable wish on my side should be attended to. It was on this occasion that the richly braided blue superfine extra finished jacket came home, adorned with a velvet collar—my suggestion, or rather indirectly the unconscious suggestion of the elder Goodman, my rival and enemy, who could only "sport" a watered silk one. It was supported by the blue and silver poplin waistcoat, long a celebrated article in the family—a vestiary barometer, as it were, by which the scale of occasions of distinction, and the rank of festivals,

were determined. As thus: "Am I to wear the Blue and Silver?" or, with grumbling: "I am sure I needn't wear the Blue and Silver for *that*." Lovely "jean" trousers, glistening like silk, snowy as snow itself, completed a costume of almost theatrical beauty—that being my highest standard.

This taste may seem a mystery, as indeed it was to many in the household. There was something in it inconsistent with my known habits. Alas, for a time I dared not own the dread secret to myself. Suffice it to say—a fine phrase which I was fond of, and seemed to combine logic with dignity—suffice it to say, then I had been suffering, hopelessly, cruelly; that I had secretly, burned, calcined, with the devouring fires of LOVE. Gentle flame, indeed! Those chroniclers who dwell on its symptoms little understand the way in which it licks and curls about the junior heart. It all began in this wise:

On one occasion—it was after the memorable struggle with the Goodmans—word had come aloft that the offspring were required below for exhibition to strangers. All hands were, as usual, piped to cleaning and frocking, and I was also, as usual, dragged from some unclean haunt, and submitted to compulsory dressing under violence. When we entered in the usual fashion (I in the rear, scowling, and as it were seeking the shelter of jungle at the edges of the room), I noticed there were three ladies present. Two were mortals, awful, repelling, and odious, like ordinary "strangers in the drawing-room;" but the third was celestial, supernatural, like the queen of the bowers of the bees in the pantomime. She was near the door at the edge of the jungle, into which I did *not* retreat, for she held me spell-bound. She was looking upward, and turned the full glory of her charms upon me. She came up, bent down to me with quite the air of the Buzzemena—such was the name of the fairy queen—and from that moment I was destroyed.

To describe her would be hopeless. Suffice it to say, I saw her yesterday, and she seems pretty much the same. She had the richest black hair, wavy and rippling, and a very oval face tapering to the chin, with a general light and brilliancy in her face that seemed to me *then* not to belong to this earth. I gazed stolidly at her as she spoke, my finger to my mouth, the favourite attitude, not able to resist the spell. She had a coaxing easy way, that seemed to me exquisite; she devoted herself to me, to the prejudice of the sisters, and drawing me over into the window, said, cozily, "Now we'll sit here together, dear, and you'll tell me all about yourself and Mr. Blackstone." I started and blazed with colour. How did she know these things? Why did she thus distinguish me? I have noticed since, that ladies do thus encourage the little boys in preference to girls, and I should like to know, is this some of the old Eve coquettishness, as it were, keeping its hand in?

My tongue was soon loosed. Her name, as she told me in answer to inquiry, was ADA BURKENSHAW. She said mine was a charming name. I blustered out it was not so pretty as Ada. I told her everything of interest about myself, how I liked this and disliked that, who were my friends, and what walks I liked, and what I was to be—a barrister, with a view to the chancellorship. I also told her that I sang, naming the Pilgrim of Love, ditty soon to be too appropriate to my situation, as my favourite performance. She was eager to hear it on the spot, but in presence of the hollow crowd it was agreed that it could not be done; but it was indistinctly arranged that at a more private interview it should certainly come off.

This flirtation, so conspicuous and even audacious, soon attracted notice, with many an "upon my word!" and "I declare, Miss Burkenshaw!" But I was emboldened by my new born passion. She declared that she was quite proud of "her new beau," and would not give him up for any one. "What, not for Captain Bulstock?" it was asked. My brow darkened. Who was Bulstock? A captain, too! I should have liked to destroy Bulstock, under fair conditions that would equalize our size and strength. She, however, relieved all apprehensions, by a charming toss of her head. "Oh, my dear, what nonsense! I shall quite give him up for Sidney." From that moment I assumed she was to be mine for ever.

This divine creature brought with her a tremendous reputation from the provinces, "on the instrument." I mean, of course, the piano. She rarely condescended to play, but to hear her was to listen and die. The contorted Herz, the involved Moschelles, with his "Swiss air" and ten variations—the mode then—and Thalberg with his luscious embroidery and easy cantering up and down the instrument were then in high vogue. With Liszt, too, and his wild, unearthly crashes, she was equally familiar. To see her nimble, not ungracefully nimble, fingers rambling so easily up and down—but I grow incoherent. On this occasion she said she would go to the instrument and play for me. "'Pon my word!" was said again, with many meaning looks, which only made me more proud.

She performed a waltz of, I think, one Chopin, then a tolerably obscure musician, incomprehensible to most ears. Her wonderful fingers thrummed and twirled, and raced and lingered, wistfully, and drew exquisite tones. It was all one to me. Had it been Jump Jim Crow, then also in vogue, she would have redeemed it from vulgarity. Anything she did was perfection. Had she taken a plate up and twirled it on the floor on its edge, it would have seemed to me the most graceful feat in the universe. That wonderful piece of gauze often used at tableaux vivans, and which imparts a softness to all outlines, corresponds to the fatal passion which was consuming my vitals. I could have heard that waltz for ever. With a charming smile, and smoothing her rippling black hair, she complied with my ardent entreaty to have it played again. I had a secret

instinct that she would not have done as much for Bulstock, captain though he might be. Oh, how I loved that woman!

I never heard such music as that, so wild, so mysterious, so creeping, so melodious, so like that to which the peerless Buzzemena had entered. Indeed, she very much recalled that witching being, who had black hair also. "Do, do, go on," I said half frantically, when she had done; I must have had a wistful face as I spoke. And about the room was said once more, "'Pon my word, quite a conquest, my dear!" By this the officers of justice had taken me by the wrist: "Now you are worrying Miss Burkenshaw, come away." My love, so I hope I may call her without disrespect, interposed at once. "Indeed he must not. I won't have my beau taken from me." The bright intelligent face, and the lustrous hair were bent down to me, and I could have put my arms round her neck and embraced her. Again from the crowd came smiles, and I heard the talismanic words "'Pon my word, Captain Bulstock!"

She played again, another waltz, in which her divine fingers seemed themselves to dance.

It was at this juncture that visitors were announced, and a pompous voice behind said:

"Now, I beg—really—don't let *us* interrupt." It was Goodman, the father, with his eldest born, my opponent and rival. "We heard it below," said Mr. Goodman, "and waited outside the door. A fine masterly touch, ma'am. Reminds me of Cramer. This is my son, ma'am, whom we shall make a musician of in time. He is learning under Mr. Shepherd. Harmony, thorough-bass, and all the rest of it."

A pang went through my heart as I saw her turn and look at William with interest, with much the same sort of interest as she had first looked at me.

"Ask him to get from D into G," went on Mr. Goodman, "and see how he'll do it."

"Yes, pa," said the odious William. "You take the chord of D with a diminished seventh."

Every one looked with admiration at this learning. Even *she* listened with curiosity. I could "diminish" nothing, as I was told contemptuously later, except a piece of thick bread-and-butter. Overwhelmed with mortification and grief, I slunk away further and further from the piano, trying to gain the jungle, whence I could glare out from between the branches. There the bright face, however, soon detected me, and brought me forth, and whispered, and comforted me. Again William the Odious intruded on our bliss, saying, in his cool, forward way:

"Look here, Miss Burkenshaw, I know about the minor thirds and all that."

Again she became curious.

"You are a wonderful young gentleman indeed!" she said.

Going away, she was talking earnestly and whispering to the head of the house.

"O, indeed, you must—and I make a point of it—to oblige me."

"O, really, he must attend to his books; he is so idle, and don't deserve any indulgence." This, of course, was only the proper language to be applied to me on all occasions; but now LOVE made me suspicious. "Well, we'll see."

"But I won't go till you promise."

Then I heard the words, "Tritonville, Tuesday."

She faded out, and I was wretched. A day passed over, then another day. I was more wretched. Suddenly I was summoned to the Council Chamber, and an address of peculiar solemnity was made to me. I was told it was high time to turn over a new leaf, and think of becoming a man, if I ever was to do so at all. That it was useless giving me indulgences, as it only had the effect of making me more dissipated and hopelessly abandoned to pleasure; that it was certain if I received any favour or relaxation I would make a bad use of it. Still, *would* it be any use giving me one more chance? If I was allowed to go out, would I make an exertion for once, and try and learn, and not disgrace us all? &c.; and here the gallows was once more introduced in perspective.

In short, it came to this: The Burkenshaws were giving at Tritonville, a ball, and in the kindest manner had asked me. It was hinted that it was more than probable that my tendency to larcency burglary or other crimes would bring disgrace on the family and interrupt the ball; but still that risk would be run, and provided I showed extra diligence between this time and that, I might be allowed to go.

Now, will be understood the significance of the unwonted interest in the vast tailoring preparations on foot, the gorgeousness of the blue and silver, the velvet collar, and other superb decorations. The costume was pushed on with ardour. A sort of private rehearsal was held the night before, and I was encouraged with the assurance "that I now looked something like a gentleman, and that if I could only contrive to behave in a corresponding way I should do very fairly."

I do not like to dwell on the interval. Suffice it to say, that the phrase in the novels, "feverish excitement," became quite intelligible to me, and that "restlessness" became equally familiar. It was at this time also that Mr. Blackstone said, looking at me in a reflective way, "I am beginning to have some hopes of you, Sidney. If you go on in this way, I may *almost* promise that you will begin algebra next month. But," he added, despondingly, "*you won't*. The old Adam is too strong in you." And then he used the rather alarming argument: "You see, my young friend, as you have shown us that you *can* apply yourself, we must keep you to it, and have no excuses in future." And Mr. Blackstone rubbed his hands with hilarity, and looked at me sideways.

At last the morning of the day came round. The anxiety of that day could not be described. The dogged slowness with which the hours moved, produced a choking at the throat, and a heaviness at the heart. At four o'clock P.M.

dressing could no longer be put off, and we all began to adorn our persons. Washing took a long time. There was some anxiety about the "extra superfine" jacket, which did not arrive until five; for though we had confidence in the brave artificer, it did seem, in his own dialect, running it "extra superfine." The expresses sent to him twice, returned, with reassuring messages that we might "leave all to him." It came, after mental agony. I was now told that now indeed was the acceptable moment to cast off the old boy of sin, and become, as it were, a citizen—*getting on to be a man*. At such a momentous juncture (I was informed) the eyes of the public would naturally be directed to a person who wore a beautiful blue jacket and jean other garments; in the case of crime or irregularity, the striking characters of such a costume would attract all eyes and fatally betray me.

Dinner—who cared for that? It was got out of the way, which was all that was desired. And now John comes with word that the carriage is at the door. Oh, agitating journey! Oh, delicious passage! On the box-seat I could give my burning soul to the wind, and commune with the sea-shore along which we journeyed for a mile or two. I rehearsed some carefully prepared speeches which were to enchain *her;* only when I thought of the fascinating promise, and conjured up her image, even that imagination made my voice falter and chased away the artful compliment.

Here was Tritonville Gate, and over the wall, as we came up, I could see the two bow windows all ablaze. Faintly to our ears was borne the hum of a musical instrument, playing for dancing, as I thought; but no, for there was something like a shout, as of a mariner giving a cry for aid, and I told the coachman "that was Mr. Cobbe" singing. A private cab drew away from the bottom of the steps, and two lovely women, *all muslin*, ascended. I saw the shadows of backs upon the window-blinds, moving grotesquely. It was *almost* my first party.

The hall was crowded, and blocked up with a heap of hats, cloaks, coats, and umbrellas even—some one affecting to attach and give numbers, but that form was soon abandoned. A gentleman and lady were sitting on hall chairs, "flirting," I was told. Through the drawing-room door, we saw figures and more backs, and animated faces, and a small lady with a fan, who tried to get her hand out. Mrs. Burkenshaw. I struggled with my agitation. I was burning to see the divinity who was consuming my soul. They were making a space in the middle of the small room, and Mr. Wicks, who played at these suburban parties, tuned pianos, and gave lessons—or *would* have given lessons had he ever been asked—now hung out a little placard, "QUADRILLE." Where was she?

There! A perfect blaze of golden amber glistening silk, with black lace; never did she look so peerless, as she came to the very top of the quadrille, queen-like, but all engrossed with her partner—a stout man with a terrier dog face and a white waistcoat, a jocular beast, who was laughing a great deal, and made her laugh. Something chilled me as I looked on, and I had not the heart to go up; and now Wicks struck up with a thrum, thrum, thrum, playing as much with his head, nose, and spectacles, as with his hands, and they all began.

There were many suburbans there—ladies in turbans—fat men—who all seemed (to me) aglow with happiness. I shrank into a corner—very "down"—whence I was presently fetched out and told not to be "glum." But as I was being led off, I felt a hand on my arm, and a voice in my ear, that made me start: "My beau! And never to come near me! Well, Mr. Sidney!"

The flashing face was stooping down to mine. I was tugging at the fingers of my gloves. A voice emanated from the terrier man. "Lord bless me, they're waiting for us! It's our turn, you know!"

"Oh, they *must* wait. I want to introduce you, Captain Bulstock, to this *gentleman*. Mr. Sidney, Captain Bulstock!" This officer looked down on me haughtily, while I looked at him sulkily. We did not like each other. "He is *my* beau, Captain Bulstock—are you not, Sidney?—and I shall expect you to come and ask me to dance."

"Dance with *him*," I heard Bulstock say, contemptuously.

I watched her all through the quadrille; she seemed to move melodiously, gliding, as it were, on wheels. She moved in a golden cloud; in the distance the bright animated face seemed illuminated from within; a thousand divine lights seemed to play there. She looked *so* happy and animated, and, alas! so unconscious of *me*, that I felt sore at heart. The captain, whom I hated, seemed happy.

Ices were going about, together with little glasses of negus and lemonade, borne on trays in rows of a dozen or so, over men's heads. (When I say men's, I mean my own and others of my standing.) They were assailed, the bearers were stopped, the trays were drawn down at the corner, just as a convoy would be pillaged on the road. Wicks had a private glass and a private bottle of sherry at his feet—*I* found it out—to impart vigour when he flagged.

A fresh blow fell upon me during that quadrille. There was confusion at the door, Mrs. Burkenshaw clutching at her husband in agitation, and dragging him towards it. Visitors of distinction were coming in—"some of the nobs," a local gentleman remarked. Nobs, indeed, and fatal nobs, our special Rocks-ahead now entering—the Goodmans, father, mother, and two virtuous youths! Was this the end? Was this the draught of nectar, to which I had looked forward? I saw the maternal eye—*one* maternal eye—resting uneasily on their costume, which was magnificent. The elder had a gold watch and chain, as I learned later, the reward for successful "eemewlation." I saw the proud father take the eldest about, introducing him to ladies. "Show your new watch, sir. That, ma'am, he won fairly—a reward for

successful study." Then the quadrille was over. She was moving about, still on the captain's arm. Now was my time. I *would* go and ask her. Mr. Wicks had hung out a banner with the device "Lancers," and was busily engaged somewhere on a level with the pedals of the piano, affecting to look for his music. But where was she? She was gone, and I wandered restlessly, looking for her.

Mr. Goodman stopped me, patronisingly. "Oh, *you* here, sir! So you are let out to parties! You mustn't be idle, though, if you want to learn cemewlation."

I found her in the greenhouse at the back with *him*. I had interrupted them, the ill-conditioned fellow saying, "Good gracious, this is getting quite a plague!" This? He *might* have referred to *me*, but I was not quite certain. But she said,

"Oh dear! Our dance? Well, the fact is, you never asked me, you know, and this——"

"This is the Lancers you promised *me*," a voice said behind me, the voice of my enemy, and now my rival.

This was too much—quite too much—much too much.

"Promised *you!*" I said, with bitter contempt.

"Do you know, I believe I did," she said, smiling. "I recollect. I must be just, you know, Mr. Sidney."

"But you told me," I said, bitterly, "that you would keep your dance for me, and I have been watching and waiting the whole night, while this—this *fellow*——"

"Halloa, youngster!" said the captain. "Keep civil before a lady."

"Oh, *I* don't care," said the virtuous and well brought-up Goodman. "Miss Burkenshaw, I know, will keep her word."

She laughed, and said, "Captain Bulstock, what am I to do with these two gentlemen?"

"Take this one, of course," he said, nodding to Goodman; "this other will stand on your dress, or do something of the kind."

"No, I don't think so," she said, smiling. "But I suppose I must take Goodman. And," she added, putting her bright face down to mine, "later we shall have *our* dance."

But I turned away with a face that swelled and glowed in a perfect agony of rage and grief. This was the end, then, after all—the end of the superfine extra—the end of the white jean—the end of the hard labours of the past week? Vengeance was the only thought. I stole a look at the Lancers. She was engaged in an animated conversation with the detested Goodman. *He* was talking to her with his disgusting glibness and volubility. I heard his father's voice. "A very clever lad—will get on—great application and eemewlation. Only last week we had a little competitive trial between him and another young fellow who ——" It was getting unendurable.

I met her coming out. The captain was with her again. "Now," I said, in a trembling voice, "you will keep your promise."

"Oh, my good little fellow, folly!" said the captain. "Get away, do. You won't dance with any more of these *children*. I want to speak to you." And he took her arm in an authoritative way.

She looked irresolute, and gave me such a beaming smile. "My poor little beau, who has been so faithful. I tell you what," she added, suddenly, "there is a pretty little belle of a girl, Grace M'Gregor; she shall dance with you instead."

"I don't want to dance with her, you cruel, unkind woman," I said, and turned away.

More trays of yellow lemonade. A valse set in à trois temps. But they were not dancing. I looked for my amber-robed queen, towards whom I could not bring myself to feel hostility though she *had* treated me so ill. I searched everywhere. The captain was also absent.

At the entrance to the greenhouse I brushed against the exemplary boy; he was telling a contemporary, "Yes, she danced with *me*, and threw over another man"—when his guilty eye rested on mine. But he did not lack courage—I must do him that justice. "By the way," he said, with insufferable coolness, "you should not call any gentleman 'a fellow' before a lady. It ain't polite."

"I don't care whether it is or it isn't," I said, breathing hard.

"That's another matter," said the virtuous youth; "but I can't permit it."

"What will you do?" I said, with elation. "I'll say it again if you like."

"Not here, I hope," he said, trembling.

"Yes, here. You're a shabby mean fellow, and I'll give you satisfaction at any moment, if you're not a coward."

So public an insult—three other boys of condition heard it—could not be passed over. He made the conventional reply, which always brings on violence: "I'd like to see you do it."

"There is the garden," I said, in a fierce rapture; "this door opens on it. Buck, here, and Smith will see fair."

"But my father——"

"Tell its mammy," I retorted, in a fury.

We went out into the cool air. We saw the bow windows at the back and the grotesque shadows, and we heard Wicks's "Thrum, thrum!" The shadows went up and down as if on wires. We "stood up" to each other, near a rose-bush, and in our splendid uniforms. I fell on him like fury, for I had her wrongs to avenge. In a second I was pounding at him like a demon. It was plain there would be only one round, when there came a flash, a golden amber flash, and a cry; and the captain had me by the hair, and said:

"Why, you little vicious imp, what are you at?"

(It was assumed, of course, that I was the aggressor.)

The bright oval face bent down close to mine, and the gentle hand was on my arm.

"What is this about, dear? My poor friend!"

I could hardly answer her. I could have fallen before her and worshipped her, for the tone of her voice. I answered with grief:

"You were so unkind, and you danced with *him!*"

Captain Bulstock laughed aloud.

"A duel, I declare; and for you, Ada!" She smiled.

"There's a galop now. Sidney, I'll make Mr. Wicks change it to a quadrille, and we will dance it together."

"Anything to prevent bloodshed," said the captain.

Oh triumph! oh joy! oh delicious moment! as I led her away Even now, a yellow dress and dark hair brings back that moment. She was mine, she would be mine; she was true, noble, generous!

"I am not quite pleased with you," she said, as we took our place at the top. "You do not trust me."

"Oh, I do, I do! But you do not care for me. You like that fellow better."

"Who? Captain Bulstock?"

"No. Goodman."

"I don't like him at all; he is a conceited, precocious little puppy."

She was mine again, she would be mine for ever! The rest was rapture; Wicks became glorified into a seraphic orchestra, the room into a considerable ball-room. I could have begun again and again, and quadrilled it all night long.

Then came supper: a noble banquet, in a room which, for obvious reasons, had been kept under lock and key. It was past one A.M. Roast fowls glistened everywhere in their own refreshing native brown, and tongues likewise bent into their own agreeable curve, and rich in their peculiar varnish. Tongue, in those days, seemed to me the viand for which I would, in preference, run personal risk of arrest and capture. I will not particularise the other delicacies; enough that there was "champagne to the mast-head," as a stout and cheerful doctor observed, his hand affectionately grasping the neck of a flask.

For the moment these delicacies took away the thought of HER. She was not there. I wondered at it after a time; for the conjunction of our common nature, with rich and rare delicacies of this sort, seemed about as natural and inevitable as that of the magnet and the bit of iron. Then it flashed upon me, where was *he*, Bulstock? Her father presently appeared, and said, jocosely, "he supposed she had gone off in a post-chaise with some one, and had abandoned him in his old age." After supper, dancing began again, and then she reappeared, and nodded over to me, brightly and happily. Then orders were passed that we were to go away.

"Going away," she cried, with her hand on my shoulder; "taking off my little beau?"

"Oh indeed!" said our people, "fine doings altogether!" (I believed that they referred to me, and blushed.) She looked confused, and tossed her charming head.

"Whisper, dear," she said to them.

"No?" was the answer in delighted surprise.

"Well, I am *so* glad. I'll come and see you in the morning, and tell you about it."

I felt that this did not quite refer to me.

"What will a certain poor fellow do?" was asked in a whisper. "Shall we tell him?"

Again I saw the bright face bent on me with a look of wistful interest; there was even a little pain in the face. She bent down to me:

"Mind you are at home to-morrow when I come, for I have a little keepsake to bring you."

Then the golden face seemed to fade out in the distance, and the tyrant Bulstock came up to claim his prey.

There was a weight, a mystery at my heart. It made me dismal. They told me in the carriage as we went home—broke it to me gently, Bulstock had proposed to her that night and had been accepted. He was a good match, with a staff appointment, interest, &c. Oh, how I suffered! I was in agony all that night, but I was too proud to let them know it. They thought I was "sulky," and it was said, "You see, he really has no feeling for anything." Oh, that night, that golden vision! It haunted me long afterwards like a dismal yet a lovely dream. Such is the story of my first small love.

After that, home life ended suddenly, and I was sent away to school.

LEAVES FROM THE MAHOGANY TREE.

A BASIN OF SOUP.

IN those dark, those pitch dark ages, before side dishes were invented, and when the majority of the half-savage chasers of the mammoth lived on fullers'-earth and cold lizard, what would not a tyrant of Central Asia have given for a French cook—a Ude, a Francatelli, or a Carême? If such a man had then lived, would not Nasopileheaver have instantly sent waggon loads of silk, rich cloths of gold and silver, chests of cinnamon, carts full of pearls and sapphires, to lure the great beneficent genius to his kingdom? Would he not have declared war on the rival king; and with spearmen, horsemen, battering-rams, and other implements of war, have instantly marched on his city, given it to sword and fire, and carried off that illustrious stranger? And having got that great master under lock and key, would he not have threatened him with the most terrible death unless he instantly invented a dish lighter, more nutritious, and more savoury, than any he had ever before devised? Immured in the hot and strong dungeon of King Nasopilcheaver, could there be any doubt what new *plat* that mighty brain in the white nightcap would have conceived. What is the lightest, most nourishing, most whole-

some, most savoury, of all cooked food? Soup, of course.

Blessings on the man who invented soup! For it rejoices the tired stomach, disposes it to placidly digest, encourages the noble organ, and comes as a promise of future good things. It is a gentle experiment to test if the stomach be in sound working order. It contains the greatest amount of nourishment that can be taken with the least exertion. Chemically it is a wonder (the cooks of the future will all be taught the elements of chemistry), for Broth, which is the humble father of soup, is literally an extract of all the soluble parts of meat. The ozmazome melts first; then the albumen. To make good soup, it is chemically necessary that the water boil slowly, so that the albumen may not coagulate in the centre of the meat before being extracted. And the ebullition must be slow, so that the different ingredients of the extract may unite with each other easily and thoroughly.

A French epicurean writer of eminence asserts that ten solid volumes would not contain the recipes of all the soups which have been invented in those grand schools of good eating, the kitchens of Paris. The soup is to a dinner what the portico is to a mansion; it is not merely the first thing to which you come, but it also serves to give an idea of what the architect intends to do afterwards; much as the overture of an opera conveys foreshadowing, and glimpses of what is to follow. A simple dinner should have the prelude of a simple soup; which, however, requires to be perfect, and demands a care, patience, and waiting watchfulness, which good housewives are more likely to bestow than a professed cook. It has been often noticed by epicureans that thoroughly good soups are rare in great men's houses. The reason is, that the kitchenmaids keep taking the soup for their ragout and side dishes, and filling it up with water, till the crude adulteration has infected the whole. In small houses the soup is a principal object, and receives the most religious care. The chief fault in England is, that soups are over spiced and under vegetabled. They are also too hurried. By quick violent boiling all the soluble and finest parts of the ingredients pass off in puffs of indignant steam, while the coarser parts only are retained in the solution. The process of soup making is a slow chemical process, and nature will not be hurried without having her revenge.

French cooks, in their versatile invention and restless desire to please, and delight, give strange and striking names to their new dishes. They have "The Soup of the Good Woman," and above all, "The Potage à la Jambe du Bois (The Soup of the Wooden Leg").

But the wooden leg is an after ingredient. Like most receipts of the first class, this one is horribly expensive; but, like most other expensive recipes, it is just as good made more economically.

Take a wooden leg—no, that is afterwards. Procure a shin of beef and put it in a pot, with three dozen carrots, a dozen onions, two dozen pieces of celery, twelve turnips, a fowl, and two partridges. It must simmer six hours. Then get two pounds of fillet of veal, stew it, and pour the soup over the meat. Add more celery; then mix bread, and eventually serve up the soup with the shin bone (the real wooden leg) emerging like the bowsprit of a wreck from the sea of vegetables.

There used to be a simple dish made in Paris (originally at Plombières) which was called cherry soup. It was made with black-heart cherries, butter, sugar, and the crumbs of toasted bread. When well prepared, it was said to be delicious.

That glorious old coxcomb, Louis Eustache Ude, who had been cook to two French kings, and who found it hard to please his noble patrons at Crockford's, never forgave the world for not permitting him to call himself an artist. "Scrapers of catgut," he says "call themselves artists, and fellows who jump like kangaroos claim the same title; yet the man who had under his sole direction the great feasts given by the nobility of England to the Allied Sovereigns, and who superintended the grand banquet at Crockford's on the occasion of the coronation of our amiable and beloved sovereign, Victoria, was denied the title prodigally showered on singers, dancers, and comedians, whose only quality," says the indignant chef "not requiring the aid of a microscope to discover is pride."

One of the most delicious, but least known French soups is the potage à la Camerani. It was introduced early in the century by M. Camerani, a famous Scapin (or knavish tricky servant) in the Italian Comedy. This erudite gourmand was celebrated for several sorts of ragouts, and more especially for a mode of cooking snails which made them even preferable to ortolans. The Camerani soup, however, cost more than four pounds a tureen full.

You took first, Neapolitan maccaroni and Parmesan cheese. Then, Gournay butter, two dozen livers of fat fowls, celery, cabbage, carrots, parsnips, leeks, and turnips, all of which were minced and mixed with the chopped livers, and placed in the stew-pan with some butter. The pot with the soup was then prepared, and the different ingredients scientifically placed in layers. First the maccaroni, then the mince, next the Parmesan. The pot was then placed on a slow fire, and the whole was allowed to soak till a perfect interfusion of tastes and flavours had taken place, and the potage à la Camerani could be poured into the plate of the delighted gourmand.

Eccentric Dr. Kitchener, after giving a recipe for a West Indian soup made with craw-fish, and mixed with spices and vegetables, says quietly, "One of my predecessors recommends cray-fish pounded alive as an ingredient in the broth to sweeten the sharpness of the blood." The energetic doctor makes no moral reflection on this suggestion, but his footnote reminds us of the cruelty of cooks, and of Charles Lamb's humourous doubts as to whether whipping pigs to

death, though inhuman as a practice, might not impart a gusto; Lamb then putting the celebrated hypothesis, argued so learnedly and exhaustively at St. Omer's, as to whether man is not justified in using the whip, if the flavour of a pig so slain, superadd a pleasure upon the palate of the eater more intense than any possible suffering conceivable in the animal. The question also arises whether it is wrong to fatten the Strasbourg goose, in order to enlarge his liver. A French writer says, "The bird is crammed with food, deprived of drink, and fixed near a great fire, its feet nailed to a plank." The torment would be unbearable, but when the big-hearted, though small-brained bird reflects that his liver will minister to the delight of Europe, he is consoled. Ude is as cruel as the solid men of Strasbourg. In an important chapter on "skinning eels," he says, "Take one or two live eels, throw them into the fire, and as they are twisting about on all sides lay hold of them with a towel in your hand and skin them from head to heel." This method is the best, he says, as it is the only method of drawing out all the oil which is unpalatable and indigestible. He then complains that he has been accused of cruelty, but defends himself eloquently, as his object, he says, is only to gratify the taste and preserve the health. Mr. Hayward, commenting on this, compares Ude to the member of the Humane Society who, wishing to save chimney sweep boys from their dangerous work, suggested that a live goose might be dragged up the chimney instead, and, some one remonstrating with the humane man, he promptly replied that a couple of ducks would do as well.

The English cook does not excel in soup. Soup must be persuaded and reasoned with; it will not submit to the impetuous tyranny of a person in a hurry. The wine, spices, and anchovy are cast into the "enchanted pot" too soon by us, and their subtle flavours volatilise and pass away into air, into thin air.

What terrible memories most of us have of soups at home and abroad! O that last pea-soup at Mrs. Fitzgiblet's! It was dished up too precipitately, and therefore, being pea-soup, it settled into a heavy miry deposit at the bottom of the tureen, and what we got was a yellowish warm water. There are other sorts of odious soups peculiar to the houses of careless Amphitryons; such as cold gravy soup with a husky skin over it; mock turtle with slabs of hard veal in it; vegetable, with peas hard as buck shot rattling about in it. There is one very favourite soup in which you come to streaks of solid sauce and veins of burning pepper, and there is also an unappreciated white soup which tastes like bill-stickers' paste.

People brag of croquet as a successful new amusement—"It brings young people together, you know." But what of the old people? For these waifs and strays of the busy world, who have dropped out of the ranks and have got out of sight of the flags, and out of hearing of the band, there is one source of amusement still open; let them cook, let them invent a soup.

See, my Lord Fitzfidget, what a delightful old age this notion offers to your notice! Make Binns turn all those dusty deed boxes and iron safes out of your den; remove those county histories you only pretend to consult, that Clarendon's Rebellion you never read, and put the room in fighting order for newer and more intellectual pleasures. This done, ring for the gardener, and order in small bundles, carefully sorted, of potatoes, mushrooms, champignons (the nankeen-coloured, generally thought poisonous, and mind there is no mistake about them), parsnips, carrots, beetroot, turnips, peas, garlic, onions, cucumbers, celery, celery seed, parsley, leeks, common thyme, lemon thyme, orange thyme, knotted marjoram, sage, mint, winter savory, sweet basil, borage, bay-leaves, tarragon, chervil, and burnet. Then send to the cook (who will, no doubt, smile, but not disrespectfully), for cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, cloves, mace, black and white pepper, lemon peel, Seville oranges, salt, anchovies, garlic, and cayenne. Tell Mrs. Redburn to send you in some lean juicy beef, mutton, and veal, some chickens, and, if it be the game season, a partridge or two, a snipe, and a woodcock. Some truffles and morells, fresh, black, and fine, and two or three bottles of Madeira will then be all your remaining wants for a pleasant morning's amusement. Of course we presume you have a neat steam kitchen range already fitted up on a small scale, and a shelf of bright stew-pans. The disjointed elements of a feast lie before you. You are like Euclid with his floor covered with isosceles triangles, and circles, and with a problem to solve. As a beginner, first try a "Soup without water;" you will make less mess, and if you fail, the materials thrown away will not be costly.

Come then, my lord, tuck up your sleeves, take courage, and fall to work. Cut three pounds of beef and veal into thin slices, put them into a stone jar with a dozen sliced turnips, two onions, and a little salt; cover the jar close in a saucepan of boiling water. There is no colouring or variety in that. Then try Mulligatawny.

Take two quarts of water, my lord, and boil a fowl; then add to it, a white onion, a chili, two teaspoonfuls of pounded ginger, two of curry powder, one teaspoonful of turmeric, and half a spoonful of black pepper; boil these for half an hour; then fry some small onions and add to the soup; season with salt, and serve up.

Who has not seen with admiration, mingled with pity, a huge turtle fresh from its azure bath in sweet Indian seas, fresh from gales off the storm-vexed Bermoothes or calms off Trinidad, cowering in a London eating-house window, its feeble flappers vainly fumbling about the straw, and a large placard upon the shell of the mute and bewildered martyr informing us that "this turtle will be killed to-morrow." That turtle will require arms full of sweet herbs, three bottles of Madeira, some forcemeat balls, and

the juice of many lemons. Only a professional man dare touch that precious creature. But Mock-Turtle, my Lord Fitzfidget, is within your grasp, though Milton may not be.

First, my lord, take your calf's head, remove the brains, wash it, and boil it for an hour. Then cut up some ham and a knuckle of veal, and stew with vegetables of all sorts, cloves, lemon peel, and sweet herbs. Let it stew for two hours. Then thicken it with butter and two table-spoonfuls of flour, and strain and cut the head and tongue into square mouthfuls (to simulate the real head and tongue). Season with browning, lemon juice, catsup, and wine. There is now left for you, my lord, the crowning pleasure of making the forcemeat balls, and adding to the haut gout (if you wish to add perfume to the violet), anchovies, mushrooms, truffles, curry powder, artichoke bottoms, salmons' livers, lobsters cut into mouthfuls, a bottle of Madeira, salted neats' tongue cut into pieces, and brain balls fried in crumbs. A passionate desire of excellence has led the English cook to make this soup a Thesaurus, nay a very Gaza of good things, hoping to transcend the great fish soup of the luxurious West Indian Islands.

The Egyptians make a delicious soup of lentils. The Scotch leek soup is very palatable; indeed in the world of soups both rich and poor may find an endless choice—from asparagus soup to water soup, from the costly Bisque to soup maigre, from mock mutton broth (only gruel and catsup) to the gorgeous and imperial turtle.

AMONG SHARPS.

In February last year, I came to London for the day, on business which took me into the City. Having accomplished the purpose of my visit more quickly than I expected, I was strolling leisurely along St. Paul's Churchyard, with the view of working my way into the Strand. The time of day was something after twelve at noon, and of all the busy stream of people that flowed city ward or ebbed past me, it seemed that I was the only loiterer. A man, however, walking nearly as slowly as I, seeing me smoking as he passed, at last stopped and asked for a light. I gave him a match. He fell back a little out of the stream of traffic into the shelter of a shop window corner, to light his cigar in peace. He was a short man about six and thirty, with brown beard and whiskers, face a trifle marked with small-pox, well dressed, of gentlemanly appearance, and spoke with a strong (indeed, much too strong) American twang.

As I continued my stroll, I soon became aware that I was followed by this gentleman. The slower I walked, the slower he walked. It is not comfortable to be followed—so I pulled up to let him pass. Instead of doing so, he no sooner came up with me, than he pulled up too.

He set his head just a thought out of the perpendicular, and looking me full in the face said, "Guess this is a tall city? Rather tangled to get about in, though? Now, it ain't like Philadelphy, where our critters knew what they was going at before they begun to build, and ruled all the streets straight ahead in right lines. No, sir."

"No?" I said curtly, and was moving on.

"No, sir," he continued, walking by my side, "and its useless for a stranger in yure city to give his mind to going anywhere, for he ain't likely to get there. Now if it ain't re-ude of a stranger asking it, because he *is* a stranger (and *we* know how to treat strangers in our country, sir), where air yeu going to? Happen yeu can put me in the way where I'm goin' to."

"I am making for the Strand," I said; "if your way lies in that direction I can show it you; if not, I can tell you how to find it."

"Just where I'm castin' about to get to," he returned; "my moorins is at a hotel opposite Somerset House, and as soon as I get into the Strand, I can fix myself right up. So I'll just couple on to you."

I allowed him to do so. I hinted that I had no wish to show discourtesy to a citizen of that great nation to which he belonged. My companion had plenty to say. He rattled on about the States being this and the States being that, so that it was needless for me to do any more talking than an occasional interjection of surprise or satisfaction, each of which was acknowledged with a Yes, sir, or a No, sir, completely final. He told me he had only been in England for a fortnight—just taken a run over to see the old country—and should be back in Noo York again in a couple of months.

When we had passed through Temple Bar, I told him he could be in no further doubt as to his way, since he was now in the Strand.

"I'm considerable obliged," he said, "I'll do as much for you when you come to Noo York. But you ain't goin' to part company like that?"

I had freed my arm and held out my hand to wish him good morning.

"You'll just do a spell?" he continued.

"A what?" said I.

"Du I not make myself clear to the British intellect? Reckon you'll liquor?"

No, I reckoned I had rather be excused.

"Wal," he said, chewing his cigar so that it assumed a rotary motion, and its point described a circle over his face. "Wal, sir, it's a custom we hev in our country, and we think it rather scaly manners to refuse. Reckon you Britishers do *not* think it scaly to slight a friend's hospitality in the street. We *du*."

As he persisted in regarding my refusal almost in the light of a personal insult, and would not listen to any explanation that we do not regard the declining of "drinks" in a similar light in our own country, I yielded the point.

We retraced our steps a short distance and entered a wine store, on the City side of Temple Bar, a very respectable place where wines are drawn from the wood. Small round marble

tables and light chairs are dispersed about the shop for the convenience of customers. Here my companion compounded a drink of soda water and gin and lemon and ginger, of which he wished me to partake. I declined the mixture and took a glass of sherry. We might have sat five minutes, when a tall and important looking personage lounged into the wine-shop. As he entered he cast a supercilious look upon all the occupants of the tables; then, raising his head, he removed his cigar and emitted a long column of smoke from his lips as a contemptuous verdict of lofty disapproval on the society he had joined. He was well-dressed—irreproachably, so far as the quality and cut of his clothes were concerned; but they seemed to assert that conscious independence of their wearer that new clothes will assert over a person who has been up all night. His black hair and small moustache were scrupulously well arranged, but his eyes blinked in the daylight, seemingly for want of a night's rest.

He sauntered up to our table and emitted another superior column of smoke over our heads.

"Know this swell?" my Yankee friend whispered.

I shook my head.

"Thought he might be a member of yure Congress, or a tailor's advertisement, or some other nob."

There was a spare chair at our table, and the person thus irreverently alluded to, after some time spent in mentally estimating the relative merits of the other vacant chairs, appeared to prevail on himself to take it and sit down.

"Spree, last night," he condescended to say presently. "Champagne supper and things till all was blue."

"Very pretty tipple," said my American friend.

"Ya-as. Then coming home with some fellahs we saw a Hansom waiting outside a doctor's door, and we chained the man's cab to an iron post."

"Man cuss much?"

"Bay Jove, ya'as. Doctor damning the cabman and swearing he should be late, cabby cutting into his horse like forty thousand, and couldn't tell what was up."

"Will yeu liquor?" inquired my American friend.

"No; 'pon m' word, you know—you'll allow me. Waiter, bottle of champagne!"

"Wal, reckon I'm not particular, so as we du liquor. (Original Champagne Charlie," the American whispered to me).

The swell put his hand in his breast pocket and carelessly drew out a roll of notes, one of which he changed to pay for the champagne.

My American friend nudged me and raised his eye-brows.

"You'll excuse me, stranger," he said, "but if I was in yure place I would take care of those notes and not keep 'em in a breast pocket, nor yet flash 'em about."

"Oh," said the swell, "I always carry them so."

"Then maybe you don't live in London, *sir?*"

"Oh, bay Jove, no. The fact is my uncle has lately died and left me a fine property down in Essex, and till the lawyers have settled up I came to have a flutter in town."

"Then yeu'll excuse me, once again, but if I was in yure place I wouldn't flutter my notes," and the American appealed to me for justification. "Ye see yeu never know what company yeu may be in."

I thought *I* knew what company *I* was in; but I didn't say so.

"Aw! for that matter," said the swell, "I know I am always safe in the company of gentlemen."

"That's correct. But heow do yeu tell a gentleman from a coon?"

"Well, I think a man's a gentleman—aw—if he's got money in his pocket."

"Happen you're right. But heow much money must a man have in his pocket to prove him a gentleman?"

"Nothing less than five pund," said the swell.

"Wal, I dunno. But for my part, I shouldn't like yeu to think yeu were talkin with anyone but a gentleman as far as I'm concerned," and my American friend produced his purse.

"Aw," said the swell, before he opened it, "bay Jove, I'll bet you a new hat, you haven't got five pund in your purse."

"Done with yeu!" said my esteemed friend. And on exhibiting his purse, he showed nearly thirty sovereigns as well as I could judge.

"Aw, then I've lost, and I owe you a hat. Aw, here is my card." He handed it to us both. Frederick Church, Esquire.

I was impressed with the notion that the faces of both these men were somehow familiar to me.

The American nudged me again and bestowed upon me an encouraging wink.

"Reckon now yeu won't bet my friend here he hasn't got five sovereigns about him?" He nudged me again.

"Ya'as I will," said Mr. Church, languidly. "I often do it for a lark. I am generally about right twice out of three times."

I said that I didn't bet.

"Aw, well, some people don't. I wouldn't persuade anybody 'm sure. Sure to lose in the long run. Bay Jove, I know *I* do. But just for the sport of the thing, I don't mind standing a new hat if you've got five pund about you. Your friend shall be a witness. It's all right, you know, among gentlemen."

I produced my purse. It contained about seven pounds in gold and silver. I also had about me a gold watch and chain, a ring or two, and a shirt pin. I observed just the faintest sign of an interchange of intelligence between my companions.

"Ah, lost again," Mr. Church remarked; "well, can't be helped! Another bottle of champagne."

This bottle my American friend insisted on paying for. I drank very little.

"Really, you know," Mr. Church remarked over the new bottle, "most singular thing—aw—three fellahs, perfect strangers, should meet like this—and all of us strange to London. Bay Jove. You're from the North (I had told them so, which was true), I'm from the East, and our friend and American brother, aw, if I may call him so, is from the West. Tell you what. As soon as ever the lawyers have done up my business, you shall both come down to my place in Essex and see me. Jolly good welcome and deuced good shooting. You shoot? 'course?" turning to my American friend.

"Sheute? Wal, a small piece. I was lieutenant in General Sherman's army for three yeeres, and very pretty sheutin' we had. Concleude yeu mean rifle sheutin'?"

"Oh, no; shooting game," Mr. Church explained.

"Yeu don't du rifle sheutin', then?"

"Bay Jove, no. I only shoot pheasants and partridges and all that sort of thing."

"Reckon yu're a good shot, perhaps?"

"No, nothing uncommon."

"Wal, how many times d'yu concleude yu'd hit the bull's-eye out of twenty *with* a rifle?"

"Oh, aw. I suppose sixteen," said Mr. Church.

"Bet yeu ten dollars yeu don't hit it fourteen."

"Done."

"Very good, *sir*. My friend here shall be umpire." This was I.

"Oh no; hang it! He's a friend of yours—that's not fair. Have the landlord." Thus Mr. Church.

The American explained that the landlord could not leave his business, and that I was only an acquaintance of half an hour, and could not be prejudiced either way. So, with some apparent reluctance, Mr. Church consented.

The next thing was, where should we go "to sheute off the affair," as my American friend put it. "I know there's a place Westminster way," he said. "I know there is, 'cause the volunteers sheute there."

I told him no; the volunteers did not shoot at Westminster, but only paraded.

"I mean a gallery," he said. "I know I had a sheute there with one or tew volunteers last week; but I couldn't find the place again."

"Call a cab," suggested Church. "Cabby 'll be sure to know."

"Where to, sir?" the cabman asked Church.

"Westminster Palace Hotel," he replied.

I was in a cab with two men whose object was to rob me, and I was being driven whither they directed. However, I was not going to be cowed at riding alone with two thieves through the crowded London streets in broad day, and I was bent on disappointing them. As we rode on, they pretended ignorance of the various buildings we passed. I pointed out Somerset House, the Charing Cross Hotel, National Gallery, Whitehall, &c.

Arrived at Westminster, Mr. Church dismissed the cab. We could walk the rest of the way, he said, and the cabman had told him where the shooting gallery was. The two walked one on either side of me. We came to a dirty back street immediately behind the Westminster Palace Hotel, down that, and to the right—a dirtier street still. I said this was a strange situation for a shooting gallery. "It was all right when you got there," Mr. Church said; "it was kept very snug."

At the lower end of this street, I was not at all ill pleased to see a policeman talking to a woman. I tried my utmost to catch his eye as we passed, but without success. We turned down a third street of slimy houses, with here and there the filthy red curtain of a low public house. Sharp round the corner into a blind alley. A dank greasy brick wall blocked the other end of the place, so I knew we had reached our destination. Scarcely more than one of the dilapidated wooden houses in the alley showed outward signs of being tenanted; decayed shutters were nailed up to the windows; the whole frontage was smothered in filth and grime. The most villanous-looking public house I ever set my eyes on was the last house but one, nearest the wall.

"That's the gallery," said Church.

"Reckon it is," said my American friend. "That's the identical crib where I made some fine sheutin' last week. Come along."

I followed them to the door. A woman went out as they entered. "Go and fetch —— and ——," two names I could not catch, I overheard Church whisper. The men went in first, I following. The beershop bar was a filthy room, about six feet square, on the right as we entered, with only a window to serve beer through. The passage was long. About three yards down it, was a partition with a half door, very strong. I saw, too, that it had a strong hasp or catch to it, without a handle, so that, once past that, a victim was shut in like a mouse in a trap. I stopped there.

"Come along, and look sharp," said my American friend, with less twang than before; "here's the gallery," and he opened a door on the left.

I looked in at that open door. I saw a strong room or cell, seven feet square, as near as I can judge—nothing but bare brick walls, no window (it was lighted for the moment from the passage), and deep sawdust on the floor. Both the men were beside the door, standing half in light half in shadow.

"Harry the Maid, and Churcher," I said, "I know you both. It won't do, and you have lost some valuable time!" I slammed the half door to gain a moment's time from pursuit, and took to my heels. I had been in the court at Worcester when those two men were tried for card-sharping. I never slackened speed until I came upon the policeman, who was still talking to the woman.

"Policeman," I said, "I think I can put you on two people you want, perhaps—Harry the Maid and Churcher."

"Harry the Maid," he replied, "is the greatest

card-sharper in England, and Churcher is the tip-top of skittle sharps; but that's not their only trade."

I told him of my adventure, and how I had tried to arrest his attention as I passed.

"Look you here, sir," he said, "as you've got away alive, and with your clothes on, from those two, just you be very thankful for having done well, and don't ask for anything more. If you *had* caught my eye as you passed, *I* wouldn't have gone into that crib after you—no, nor yet if there had been two more along with me. If we want a man out of that place we go ten and a dozen strong, and even then it's a risk."

"But, supposing I had really been a simple countryman, and passed that half door and gone into the trap?" I asked.

"*If* you had come out any more, it would have been in your shirt," replied the policeman.

THE MUSIC OF THE SPHERES.

I.

Hast thou not heard it, the universal music?
The throbbing harmony, the old eternal rhyme?
In the wild billows roaring,
In the mad torrent pouring,
And keeping with the stars its beat and march sublime?
Hast thou not heard it when the night was silent,
And nothing stirred but winds amid the trees,
And the star-orbits, strings of harps celestial,
Seemed quivering to the rush of melodies?

II.

If in thy soul there pulse not some faint responsive echo
Of that supernal everlasting hymn,
Thou'rt of the low earth, lowly,
Or livest life unholy,
Or dullest spiritual sense by carnal grossness dim.
Hear it, oh Poet, hear it! Oh, Preacher, give it welcome!
Oh Loving Heart, receive it, deep in thine inmost core,
The harmony of Angels, Glory, for ever Glory,
Glory and Peace and Joy, and Love for evermore!

THE HIGHWAY TO THE HOSPITAL.

How many years, and in how many ways, has prudence been preached to man? Prudence, that gathers gold by grains out of the hardest life-rock! In a thousand forms, now homely as buttermilk, and now arrayed in Oriental colours, the moralist has presented patient, even-tempered Prudence—the truest friend a man can invite to be seated within his gates. And how stands the work even now? Centuries of warning, ages of woe; broad shores strewed with the wrecks of countless lives—illustrate the moralist's noble truth; and yet the highway to ruin is as a Derby-day road, compared with the country lane in which Dame Prudence of the sober skirt and homespun hose is leading the way.

In an old quarto, Gothic edition, the Nef des Turnes, by Symphorien Champier, published in the year 1502, we find the moralist preaching in a form that was very old even then. The Highway to the Hospital is older than the drunken community of the Children without Care, and the rest of the representative gentry "who knew Hebrew," and were borne about among the vineyards and orchards of France, in the company of representative figures of wantonness and dishonesty. Amid the orgies of Briquerasade and the rascalities of Cartouche, and the degrading superstitions of the Grand Grimoire, which pandered to the passions and vices of the ignorant multitude through many generations, we find the moralist at his patient work. The Highway to the Hospital is set forth in a series of warnings that, albeit they were being murmured in men's ears some four centuries ago, sound like the preaching of yesterday, and wholly and strongly apply to to-day.

The ways to ruin—to the hospital—the asylum—the workhouse—are indeed many—the ancient moralist taught the country bumpkins of France, in short sharp sentences. People who have little money and wear silks and costly clothes go to the hospital. Old soldiers who have been spendthrifts through their youth, go to the hospital. People who put no order whatever in their expenditure, go to the hospital. Idle and neglectful folk who fear labour in the days of their youth, go emphatically to the hospital. Hand-to-mouth livers—to the hospital.

The moralist of the sixteenth century, it will be seen suffices for the nineteenth. Those who fear labour in the days of their youth and take their way to the hospital or workhouse in their age, are a host among us—nay, there are those, and by the thousand, who toil with a will, and yet reach the hospital at last, and these are witnesses who tend to the confusion of the moralist. Hand-to-mouth livers are modern presences who need rebuking as sternly as the ne'er-do-wells of 1502. Science has smoothed the path of the thrifty in these latter days, so that the hand-to-mouth liver has not the excuses of his far-off predecessors. But we must leave the old moralist's line untouched. Thrift needs a rampart of maxims to prevent its Quaker look from being blotted out by show and extravagance, and the silk wearer who should sport worsted. The disorderly distributor of his resources is of our time, as the official gentlemen of Basinghall-street are here to testify. The moralist proceeds. Lovers of litigation—to the hospital. Whither are these tending even now, with all our law reforms? People who engage in a business which they don't understand—to the hospital. Jacks of all trades and masters of none are of an ancient race, and the blood has not died out yet. They are shabby citizens who never thrive apace, or make an inch of progress in art, letters, or industry. Families wherein there is much dancing, and in whose home many banquets are spread—to the hospital. Who eat their corn in the green ear—to the hospital. Who

gamble till midnight, who burn wood and candles through the night, swill the wine of the cellar, and sleep far into the morning—to the hospital. Corn is eaten in the green ear still: sometimes the seed-crop is consumed. We have gamblers who make the first pack after midnight. We are distinguished by roysterers who rob to entertain, and burn the candles and wood of other people throughout the dark hours.

Who marry for love, having nothing—to the hospital. We are now discussing on how many hundreds of pounds sterling per annum two young people of the middle class may assume the responsibilities and duties of matrimony.

The prudent starting point is a moot question still, because the moralist's other warnings are neglected. The silks are worn, the feasting is held, the wood and coals are burning in the thousands of houses which are ruled in this land by what Mrs. Argus over the way says.

Who are lazy dressers in the morning—to the hospital. Who work in holiday clothes—to the hospital. On the other hand, people who allow their hangings to rot against their walls, and their linen to decay in their chests—to the hospital. Who becomes security for his fellow-man—to the hospital. The moralist is hard in this unqualified condemnation of the friend who takes risk for his friend. The borrower, the lender, and the surety, are three individualities not to be dismissed in a few oracular words. In the main, our ancient moralist is right. The borrower, he possibly argued, is, as a rule, the thriftless man; ergo he will not meet his engagement, and his surety will have to pay. But the trio who figure in a loan are interesting creatures who refuse to be lightly and curtly handled. Poor gentlemen and journeymen who indulge in kickshaws—to the hospital. People who leave their gardens, orchards, and vineyards unenclosed, when the fruit is ripe—to the hospital. These are cousins-german at least to the family that has pursued the unprofitable occupation of shutting the stable-door after the steed has been stolen, from father to son, through unnumbered generations.

The moralist opens some ways to the hospital which are severe, in the manner of Rochefoucault; as, for example, people who ask their neighbours often to break bread with them—to the hospital. Fathers and mothers who make over their worldly goods to their children, in the faith that these will honour and cherish them in their old age—to the hospital. This latter warning, we take it, was forced upon the moralist by the constant witnessing of the deeds of undutiful children, in the agricultural districts of old France, who were in the habit of grumbling over the old man and woman in the chimney corner, as incumbrances, since they were regular charges on the farm, and could not be got rid of.

Who let the horse's back become raw, for want of timely attention to the saddle—to the hospital. Who, grudging an outlay of ten crowns, lose one hundred—to the hospital. Cowley has turned the moralist's warning sharply in a line:

> The rich poor man's emphatically poor.

People who having but slender means, eat apart, the husband at one hour and the wife at another—to the hospital. The moral precept is good to-day. The meal in common is the happy and economical meal. Who are lavish, living in the hope of a legacy—to the hospital. Who having a groat, make largesse of a shilling—to the hospital. Who travel to distant markets or fairs, when they should be working, still only for a tenpence, and spend a shilling besides losing several days' work—to the hospital. To the hospital, and at a galloping pace, without over-much sympathy from anybody!

The moralist sums up the travellers on the highway to the hospital, in a few sharp sentences. In the year 1502 a spade was emphatically called a spade: then, the faults of fools were dubbed folly. The moralist said finally to the ignorant country folk who get their literature out of the hawker's pack—all gourmands, swearers, blasphemers, idlers, sots, gipsy-rascals, are inheritors of the hospital. He who moralised four centuries back, could he wake in a Breton village to-morrow morning and listen to the commérage of the neighbourhood, would not find much work laid out for him in the way of amending his warnings. He would find the old figures still tripping, stumbling, or singing and capering, along the high-road to ruin. He would pass the house where the wood and candles were burning all night. Should he peep into the stable he would perceive the mare with a raw back, and the pièce de conviction in the shape of a ragged saddle on the harness-peg. The silk of the farmer's daughter would rustle in his ear. His eye would fall upon the unprotected orchard: and swinging upon a gate, a narrow-browed churl would appear to him still nibbling his grain in the green ear!

SIXTY-EIGHT IN ABYSSYNIA.

I AM mule Number Sixty-eight. How I acquired powers of observation and the gift of speech is my secret. If disclosed at all, the communication will be made to my own people only. The mules upon two legs will get no help from me.

My address, at birth, was Panticosa, on the Gallego, Pyrenees. My mother was a mare of great beauty owned by a Caballero, who farmed his own lands. My father was the greatest donkey in the South of France.

Here let me observe that the wretched little asses to be met with in the market towns of Spain, are not the fathers of that magnificent quadruped the Spanish mule. Our noble sires are a tall ancient race, whose blood has been kept blue since the days when Spain was conquered by the Moors. Although our mothers are nearly all residents in Spain, our fathers are

citizens of Southern France, and periodically cross the Pyrenees to see their wives.

During the first year of my life, I did nothing but amuse myself. At three years old, I drew a light cart about the farm on which I was born, and carried the youngest daughter of my owner. I remained on the farm until nearly four years old, when my owner died, and I was sold to a Senor José for sixty dollars. José was a contrabandist, and employed me for two years in carrying French goods into Spain through the wildest depths of the frontier. I was present at no fewer than three fights between the contrabandists and the guardios civiles. The last of these was connected with some political movements of General Prim.

As my colour was peculiar, it was suggested that I might lead to the identification of the band; I was accordingly sold for Seville, where I carried goods from the railway station to some country villages. At the end of this time I was taken with four others to Gibraltar, and sold to some Englishmen for something over one hundred and ten dollars. Thence I was shipped for Abyssinia. They hoisted me on board by passing under my belly a piece of canvas bound with rope, and they put me into a stall only just broad enough to hold me. On each side were placed other mules, and more were put on a deck below; our faces were turned toward an opposite row of mules, our heels to the steamer's side. There were two hundred of us, who, after a voyage of eleven days, were landed and led to the Alexandria railway station, and carried in twenty-four hours to a sandy plain called Suez, where with two thousand others I stayed for a week. Then I was put into another steamer like the first, but hotter, and six days after the commencement of my second sea voyage the steamer came to port in Abyssinia. Two visitors came to see us, one of whom was clearly endowed with more than ordinary discrimination.

"That is a remarkably fine animal," he observed, pointing in my direction.

"A little small," said his companion.

"So much the better. A mule of fourteen hands will thrive where one of fifteen hands would lose condition. You can clear out your cargo this afternoon, captain. The naval officer has promised to send half a dozen native boats alongside; with five-and-twenty in each, two trips will finish the lot."

"Who will take charge of them when they land?"

At this question our visitors laughed. "Why," said one of them, "I suppose you will next ask me for a receipt for your cargo. All you have to do is to send the mules on shore. The Transport train may have detailed some men to catch them. If they have, they will get most of them; if not, it will be nothing new. The beasts will have to take their chance. But mind you give them a big drink before they go into the boats. Water is scarce on shore."

The crew of my boat consisted of six men, all blacks; indeed, I now discovered what I had first begun to suspect at the Alexandria Railway Station, that men vary as much in their colour as horses or mules. Two of these men occupied themselves in taking from me and my companions the canvas halters which had been placed on our heads before quitting the vessel.

"I do not believe," said one, "that the English are soldiers; for although I have seen more than one thousand five hundred Indian warriors land, and two thousand mules, I have only counted fifty white fighting men."

"They have," said another, "some white warriors at Aden, but they are above all devils at sea. It was only yesterday that they wished to tow thirteen of our sailing boats with that fire ship yonder, so that we might take two loads of stone to the pier which the Chinese are building, instead of the one load which we said was the most we could carry in twenty-four hours."

"Ridiculous. A child could see that when you fetched two loads instead of one, the pier would be built twice as fast, and you would only receive half the money."

"Exactly. So thought the captain of the dhow. We agreed to let the white faces fasten the thirteen vessels together by ropes, one after the other, in a string: but when the steam-tug tried to pull us on, we had all anchored."

"Ha! ha! What did the fools do then?"

"First, they swore; then, they sent an interpreter to explain that if we allowed the fire ship to tug us, we should have no trouble with our sails. As if we had not known that! Then they swore again, and then we lighted our pipes; and then they became very quiet. One gets to be afraid of these English when they stop talking. After a little while, a boat with twelve men came from their fighting ship. The men had swords. A little boy about fourteen years of age was their chief. He stepped into the leading dhow, told his men to tie its captain to the mast, and—before Allah, it is true!—they flogged him."

"Did not the crew of his dhow fight for their captain?"

"No, they said afterwards the Europeans looked so wicked they did not know what to do. Well, this abhorred boy went to the second and third dhows and flogged their captains also; mine was the fourth, but I and all the boats in the rear had our anchors up before the Europeans reached us. The boy only laughed at me as the tug pulled us on. Now here we are in shallow water. We must put out the mules of these unbelievers, but at any rate we have got most of their halters. What fools these English are, not to have put one of their men in our boat!"

I was now forced to walk up some planks which led from the bottom to the top edge of the craft. All around me was water. Three or four men struck at and pushed me from behind, until I half jumped, half was thrown, into the sea. I saw land about one hundred yards to my front and swam for it. The water was very warm. I soon got to a shallow place

and walked on shore, where I laid down and rolled for ten minutes.

Since leaving Suez I had not had a chance of such a cleaning. I now looked about me. The blacks were shoving my friends out of the six dhows into the water. Most of them made for land, but a few were idiots and swam out to sea. Some of these found out their mistake, some were chased back by boats, three or four were drowned. I saw the bodies of six mules, three camels, and one horse at the brink of the sea close to where I landed. Several live camels were in the water, some standing, some sitting, and one drinking. I was afterwards informed that those who either stood long in the water, or drank much of it generally died, and that they had been in the first place frenzied by excessive thirst.

I noticed that about fifty light-brown men, who had each one or two halters, were catching the mules. Most of us had landed without halters, which of course made us more difficult to seize; but we were all so bewildered by novelty that we could easily have been caught had the men taken any trouble with their task; but there was only one, a little white fellow on a pony, who seemed to care a fig what became of us. He appeared to command the others, and had a long whip with which he beat the men more than the mules. The white fellow tried to noose the lash of his whip round my neck; but I had made up my mind to be free for that night, at least, so I kicked up my heels and bolted.

I then cantered forward a quarter of a mile, and found that I was on sandy land, upon which grew green bushes; and although I could munch the bushes, they were poor eating. Two camels whom I passed, were browsing upon them with great relish. I was, however, neither hungry nor thirsty, but glad to lie down upon firm land. About this time the sun set, and darkness followed almost immediately. I dropped into a deep slumber. When I awoke, a wind had sprung up, which blew before it large clouds of dust. Two jackals were sniffing at my hind legs. Watching my opportunity, I sprang on my legs, and jumped towards the larger of the pair; my fore-legs came down upon his neck. Before he could recover from his surprise, I bit one of his limbs nearly through, and then turning my heels upon him, broke his skull with repeated kicks.

The excitement and exertion consequent upon being thus disturbed in my sleep, by vermin, roused me thoroughly. I stood erect, listening to the yelps of the packs of jackals who at night in this country invariably draw near the precincts of the quarters of us civilised creatures. Sometimes I heard the hoarser cry of a hyena. After a while, I again lay down, and slept till morning. At sunrise I felt hungry, and, judging that little food could be got in the open country, went down to look for my breakfast among the abodes of men. I walked quietly to the point where I saw most dwellings; this was close to the water, and there were huge piles of most excellent provender. It was guarded by men who drove other animals away; but by judicious reconnoitering I discovered a large bag separated from the rest, which I knew, from its smell, to contain chopped straw. With my teeth and fore-foot I soon tore open the bag, and made a hearty meal; after this I essayed to quench my thirst, but found the sea to be undrinkable.

I addressed myself to two mules employed on the contents of the bag I had left. One of them, a huge grey Italian, intimated that there was drinking water at five minutes distance. I walked in the direction he had mentioned and saw over five hundred mules gathered around a dozen large iron tanks filled with water which ran into wooden troughs surrounding them.

The mules were chained together by threes or fives, each string being attended by one man. Now, every mule wanted to drink first and every muleteer wanted to have his animals watered first. The troughs, when full, would give room for forty mules to drink at a time, but as they were usually worked they would water only twenty. There was no sort of order kept; mules and men pressed indiscriminately towards the water; the string of mules got entangled; the four-footed people bit and kicked, while the two-footed swore a good deal and fought a little. Besides the mules tied up and escorted by drivers, there were about a hundred who, like myself, were loose. Half of these were nearly mad with thirst, and, reckless of consequences, forced their way through the throng. A loose mule had a great advantage in not being tied to companions; on the other hand every man's hand was against him, and although he might, and often did, force his way to the troughs, the moment he dipped his mouth into the water, one or two nasty muleteers would strike at his nose with sticks. I have seen animals so thirsty that they would even when heavily belaboured on their nostrils, go on drinking; but unless a mule is really dying for want of water he cannot endure the pain of blows on so tender a place.

At length the captive mules grew fewer, and we who were free had a chance of getting comfortably to the troughs. About eighty of us were left, and the water was still flowing into one of the troughs at which about a dozen of us could have stood in comfort. But as we all struggled and fought to be helped first, a good deal was spilled, and when not more than half of us had drunk I heard one of the men on the tanks say, "I think we have been pumping long enough for these stray mules; let us go, mates, and look after our dinners." Shortly afterwards the water ceased to flow, and this was especially unlucky for me, as I had a few minutes before, by dint of biting, forced my way to the troughs, and with the aid of my heels had kept my position only long enough to lap up about half what I should have liked to drink. But there was no more water, so I trotted away to find food. Moving off in a hitherto unexplored direction, I had walked for a quarter of an hour when I saw several long rows of mules.

Upon approaching them, I found that about one hundred animals were in each line, fastened by halters to a thick rope one hundred and twenty yards long, of which the two ends and some of the intervening parts were in the ground.

There was strewn on the ground before them plenty of chopped straw, to which I directed my attention. While so engaged, the drivers came round with grain. I could not get at any of what was in nose-bags, but secured to myself a good share of what was shaken down upon the ground. The other mules, who had allowed me to eat as much as I would of the chopped straw, strongly objected to my having a part of their rations of corn; but what then? I was untied, and could move as I chose. Occasionally a muleteer shouted at me, and, of course, I let him shout. If he came near me with a stick, I simply trotted off and fed at another part of the line.

As the mules were not all fed at the same time, but got their corn whenever it suited the muleteers to attend to them, by visiting different lines in succession, I ate well; but the heat was great and my thirst increased hourly.

I betook myself again to the tanks, round which a hundred other mules were waiting. Several parties of animals with drivers soon appeared, but on being told by a man who stood on the tanks, "There will be no water this afternoon," they went unwillingly away.

I tried the sea. Some slight relief I got by lying down and bathing. One mule was greedily drinking the sea water; the more he drank the greater seemed to be the pain from which he suffered. At length his limbs, which had been gradually growing weaker, failed him altogether; he fell on his knees, a wave threw him on his side, and I saw him drown, as he had not strength to recover his feet. This drove me from the sea. During the night I saw seven jackals on a dead horse, and thought that to-morrow they would be on me. I came upon a group of tents. It struck me water might be found in them. I entered one, and soon smelt water, but it was shut in a skin, which I endeavoured to tread open; but it slipped away from my hoofs, and the noise caused by my efforts woke a man who had been sleeping. He drew something from under his head, and I soon heard the click of a pistol lock. Evidently I was taken for a wild beast. But I had the presence of mind to remain motionless, and the man presently discovered that I was a civilised being, like himself. He put the weapon back under his pillow and shouted, "Get out!" This intimation I obeyed; then, listening outside until his regular breathing told me that he was asleep, I again ventured in and tried to open the water-skin; but a second time I awoke the sleeper, who, rising, flung a bottle at me, and then barricaded the entrance of his tent, so that I could only put my head inside. This I did. I remained, gazing at the skin for an hour; when suddenly the bright idea flashed across my mind that there might be perhaps worse guarded water in some of the other tents. Acting upon this thought, I proceeded to the largest of them, where, oh! bliss, my nose touched a large tub full of water. It was brackish, but I cared not for that. I felt, not that I was drinking, but that life was re-entering my veins. When I walked into the tent, it was only the hope of finding water which enabled me to drag my limbs; but when I had exhausted the supply in the tub I felt able to carry a camel up the Pyrenees. Looking gaily around, I espied in the corner a bucket, which, on trial, I found to contain more water—this time of most excellent quality. I drank now, not for life, but for pleasure, thoroughly relishing my liquor. As I poked for the last mouthfuls, I upset the bucket. This awoke somebody, who shouted, "Who is there?" upon which I judged it prudent to walk out, passing over the two gentlemen who lay stretched athwart the door.

The person I had disturbed soon had the others awake, and told them there had been a mule inside, and he wondered what it could have been doing. "Try the water," said a voice which I recognised as that of the colonel, who had come to see us upon our arrival. "By Jove, the washing water is gone!" cried one. "And the drinking water too!" shouted another. "That confounded mule must have swallowed at least ten gallons." "Never mind," answered the colonel, "I darcsay it will do the poor brute good. I wish every mule could have as much."

The sun now being up I made for the mule lines to get breakfast.

The day before, a few very feeble attempts, which I easily baffled, had been made to catch me; but the agony of thirst I had endured throughout the night determined me to let myself be caught now, as I saw that a loose mule in this country had little chance of anything to drink. When, accordingly, a strong bare-legged man with a halter in his hand approached me, as I was feeding on some chopped straw, I suffered him to slip the collar over my head. He tied me to four other mules and led us to water; he fought hard for us, but we took an hour in getting to the trough. While pushing through the crowd I noticed a body of some sixty handsome mules who were led by blacks; these kept together, and some horsemen, dressed in blue, cleared, but not without using their whips, a way for their charges, who were quickly watered.

After drinking we were led to camp, and got our grain; then we were saddled with Persian saddles, which are soft and not uncomfortable to bear, but very heavy, being over eighty pounds in weight. My master, a Persian muleteer, tied us together in a string of five, then mounted a small pony, and seizing the halter of the first mule, led the party.

Our employment for that day was to carry bags of grain from the piles of forage to the mule lines. Each bag weighed seventy-five pounds, and we carried two. The distance being about a mile, we made two trips in all, and as far as the quadrupeds were concerned, we might have undertaken more. However, as

our master had to do the loading and unloading, he gave us an easy life.

We were lucky that evening, for we got water a second time. At night we rested comfortably, some standing, but most of us lying. Mules are very different in this respect from horses, particularly from Eastern horses. Without meaning any disrespect to the memory of my dear mother, who was the most amiable mare in the world, I must say that, in my opinion, horses are foolish animals; if a hundred of them had been fastened to a rope as we were, instead of conducting themselves reasonably and peaceably, as was our fashion, they would have bit and kicked until half of them were hurt. What is the consequence? Man, who is content to tether us by the head only, ties them by the head and hind feet, so that not only are they much more confined than we are, but they are, to a great extent, checked in that social intercourse which is one of the main charms of existence: to say nothing of the unpleasantness they must suffer from having no friend nigh to scratch their sides in those portions out of the reach of their own teeth. On the other hand, my father's family are, perhaps, a little too patient of injuries, and do not, by resenting small liberties taken with their good-nature, establish for themselves a proper respect. I think we mules may fairly claim to have inherited all the good qualities of our progenitors on both sides, without any of their defects. From our mothers we get courage, strength, and a comely shape, accompanied by power and skill in the use of our heels against a foe. But we possess also the patient endurance, the sureness of foot, and the quiet good sense of our sires, from whom also we have received a melodious voice, softened and attuned by a remembrance of the ringing neigh of our mothers. But I indirectly praise myself.

Several descriptions of forage were at different times served out to me; six pounds of gram (an Indian grain), oats, or barley, was my daily ration. Indian and English compressed hay or chopped straw was also added; the English hay was very good. Sometimes, too, we had issued to us, compressed forage, which is a mixture of hay and oats squeezed into a small bulk. The British government may like to hear that I don't approve of it much. A good deal of the grain is wasted while I am eating the hay. Again, at some places grass is to be found, at others grain, but if the compressed forage is employed there is (as it contains both corn and hay) no good management possible in issuing rations of whatever kind of provender is furnished by the country.

One circumstance alarmed me. Occasionally a mule would show symptoms of slight illness. In a few hours there would be a running at the nostrils, and the eyelids would become heavy and red; then the tongue and gums would change colour, a large quantity of matter would issue from the nose, and within twelve hours after his first sickness, he would in all likelihood be dead, exhibiting a distended belly, a stiffened mouth, and squared nostrils from which a mucous fluid still trickled. After death, it was at first the custom to pay but little attention to the obsequies of my deceased companions. Our number was daily thinned also by desertion. The muleteers had so many to lead to water, that to lessen work they were constantly permitting an escape; then when we came in we were so carelessly tied that we could pull the ropes loose. I have known five hundred mules to be at one time free. Animals thus loose constantly wandered to some distance from camp, and often died for want of water. I believe, too, that many were carried off by the surrounding blacks; indeed, I once heard an officer say that of the first ten thousand mules landed, only fifty-two per cent could be accounted for; of the remainder it could only be guessed that they were dead or stolen.

The muleteers who had charge of us spent most of their time in grumbling. On the fourth day after my arrival I heard all the Persians agreeing with each other to do no work unless their wages were raised, and they were permitted to choose their own headmen.

Having watered and fed us as usual, they did not put on our saddles, but lay down and smoked. About noon a white man came to them and tried to induce them to saddle. Next day I heard them say that they had been put on half rations until they returned to work, but they did not care for that. They could exchange some of our corn for food with the Shoho natives of the country. Two days later, five white men came into the lines and called the Persians, to the number of one hundred and fifty, together; they then asked the headmen if they would saddle us. The answer was "No." The white men caught hold of the best dressed headman, who had in his girdle two pistols and a dagger, threw him on the ground, and bade a Hindostani man flog him. I thought the Persians would have killed the white men, but I heard my master say to a companion, "Hassan, you must not attack the English; they are few before us; but they have a thousand soldiers' five hours from this and more upon the sea. Do not be mad." The Hindostani man was allowed to beat the Persian. When this was finished his friends said they would work, which they did that afternoon, but they moved very slowly.

That evening several of them formed a circle in front of me; they talked bitterly of the English, complaining not only of the pay, but that they got no better food than the Hindostani, and much less than the Europeans; that they were threatened with loss of their riding mules or horses and having to walk, which had not been their custom in Persia; and that the white officers did not understand them when they complained. About one hundred of them agreed to set out that night for a town called Massowah, two days distant.

Personally, I think it was a great pity that they left, as they were, except a few Europeans, the only people at Zoola who understood

mules. They cared more for our comfort than either the Arabs or Hindostani.

Next morning, as my master had deserted, I got neither food nor water, until a white man came into the lines and bade some other Persians take us to the tanks. My friend, the grey Italian, and myself, were handed over to an Arab who already had care of six animals.

I had been much worse cared for by the Persian than in Spain, but until I came into the hands of the Arab I had no idea how a man might in some cases misbehave towards a mule. He took no interest in seeing that we got our full allowance of water. Once, when he knew he was not watched, he dragged us away from the crowd round the tanks before we had a drop. As to our food, he gave a good deal of it to the Shohos for firewood and milk; the rest he would sometimes put on the ground before us so carelessly that the wind blew much of it away; when we had it in nosebags he often left them over our noses for hours after the corn was finished, until we were nearly stifled for the want of air. He spent his time chiefly in sleeping, cooking, and playing cards. I remained with him fourteen days, when one morning at the water trough I failed to get an opportunity of drinking. Our master, when four others had finished, pulled us away without giving me a chance. All that day and the next night I suffered pain from thirst; but what was my horror when, on the following morning, I heard the Arab tell a companion that as the head man was away he should spare himself for that day the trouble of taking us to the tanks.

I saw that I must do or die; my halter rope was, for a wonder, well tied. I begged the grey Italian to gnaw it for me, as I had observed him do before for other mules, and he got through it in about half an hour.

I was now free, and made for the tanks. When I came near the troughs I saw there was but little chance of getting to them for two hours, as there was a dense crowd around. As I groaned over my ill fortune, I heard a man say, "Catch that good looking chesnut!" An Arab approached me, seized my halter, and led me before an Englishman, who said "he will do." I was handed over to a Shoho who already had charge of two other mules, and found myself in ten minutes at the water, to which an approach had been cleared for the party to which I belonged.

I was now one of a hundred mules belonging to the artillery. My companions, though not large, were of more than usual activity and compactness of shape. We had only eight Arabs to tend us, but these had little to do beyond giving us our feeds; at which times a white man, of whom there were five connected with us, watched them narrowly. We had plenty of provender, and, with one or two exceptions, we were watered twice a day. Fifty black natives (Shohos) used to lead us to the tanks and clean up our lines.

The day I entered this troop, my new master cut, with a pair of scissors, a letter on one side of my neck, and the number, sixty-eight, on the other. Next morning a saddle was put on me, surmounted by a framework of iron, and I was led to the guns. One of these was taken to pieces, and the smallest, but heaviest, part was placed across my saddle; a second portion was put upon another mule, and the wheels were laid upon a third. I took this operation very quietly, as did also the wheel mule; but our other friend strongly objected to being loaded. I had the satisfaction of hearing myself pronounced a serviceable animal. The troublesome one, it was agreed, should be dismissed from the artillery, and sent back to the transport lines. The same operation was performed with several other mules; but when about thirty of us had been loaded, we were unloaded and marched back.

One night two Hindostani men entered our lines. They looked carefully at the rough hut in which the Arabs slept. Finding these buried in slumber, they proceeded to untie me and three other mules, and led us off to another part of the camp. At dawn, I, and two new companions, were saddled, loaded, and marched off. As soon as we got beyond the lines, my new driver mounted me, and I had to carry him in addition to a load of two hundred pounds, four hours, along a sandy road, varied only by our master's taking a doze half way, while we had still to stand under our loads.

I had been stolen to replace another mule. Next morning, tied to two other people of my race and country, I was led from this camp, which I found was called Komayle.

My load consisted of two bags of rice weighing each seventy-five pounds, tied by ropes to a saddle which I heard called Egyptian. Its framework was of clumsy make; any hard work would have broken it; it was heavy; it hurt my back; it was, in fact, a detestable saddle.

For the next four days I got a fair allowance of corn, but very little grass; the road led through a long defile and was very rough, in one place in particular, Sooroo, where it passed between cliffs three hundred feet high, which shut out all view of the sun, I had to jump from rock to rock. No easy task, for I was attached to two companions, and our master, save when he saw a white man in the distance, always got upon one of us, who had thus to carry both a load and a man.

My driver knew little about mules, and cared less. He would generally allow us to drink if we actually passed water on the road, but would only go out of his way to drive us to streams or wells, when forced to do so. I saw him take twenty pounds of rice out of one of the bags, which he rather skilfully sewed up again. This lightening of my load would have been an advantage, had the grain been taken from both sides, but the destruction of the even balance hurt a back already galled.

On the fourth day we climbed a considerable hill, and reached Senafé. Here, with the exception of one journey, which I made back to

Komayle to take up biscuits, I rested for some time.

At Senafé I was better cared for than at any time before, except when with the artillery. I was very regularly watered and fed, and had plenty of fresh grass, cut in the neighbourhood. I attributed the improvement in my condition, not to any increased affection on the part of my driver, but to his being watched by other Hindostani headmen, who were in turn kept in check by four or five whites. I also got in succession two new kinds of saddle; the first was called a Bombay pad, and consisted simply of two canvas cushions joined together at the part which rested over the ridge of my back and with some bamboos fastened to them, round which ropes could be passed to tie on the loads. It is not bad, weighs about fifty pounds, and cannot easily be put out of order by a careless muleteer; the parcels put on it are, if small, often wrapped in a rough matting called a seleita, which can then be thrown across the saddle. The second was called the Otago. My own impression was that it was comfortable, and it never seemed to break; the loads, too, were put on quickly.

I attribute my having got safely through the arduous campaign to the good health and condition in which I found myself at my start from Senafé, thanks partly to watchful supervision and the care and rest which I had at Zoola with the artillery.

At the close of January I started from Senafé bearing a Bombay pad-saddle and two small barrels of rum, one slung on either side. Our party consisted of two hundred soldiers and about as many mules. Our march led, the first day, through a well cultivated country, dotted with numerous villages.

My first day's travel passed without incident. On the second, I was one of a couple of hundred mules who were guarded by twenty white soldiers, armed with long muskets. One of these men picked up a sharp stone, and while he held it in his hand, looked at the fore feet of several of my companions, none of which seemed to meet with his approbation, until he surveyed mine, when he seemed satisfied, and said to another soldier, "Smith, how would you like some of that rum?" "Tibbett," was the answer, "I'd give a finger for a pint of that 'ere licker; but it's no go." "Stay with me," said Tibbett, "and you'll see."

Tibbett lifted up my off fore foot and inserted a stone in the hollow of my hoof, in such a position that it bore on the frog, and in five minutes I was walking lame. Tibbett then called the attention of his superior to the fact, adding that he and Smith had better detach this mule from the string, and wait till he could see a spare animal to whom to transfer the load. The sergeant approved; Tibbet let the other animals pass, and, looking round to see that there was no officer within view, led me into some bushes, and bored a hole in one cask, from which he drew off about two quarts of the rum. Smith meanwhile kept watch, and when the barrel was again plugged up, received his share. Then Tibbett took the stone out of my foot, rejoined the string of mules on the road, and overtook (still leading me) the sergeant, to whom he reported that I had suddenly become well. Tibbett walked quietly with me into camp; but Smith was dragged in drunk, and in disgrace.

I remained six days at Addigerat, fed chiefly on grain of the country, which, though not so good as that brought in ships, I may venture to call very tolerable. When I set out again, I was one of the advanced brigade, which consisted of eight hundred soldiers and two thousand mules. On the morning on which the advanced brigade started, I was, with two companions, conducted to a tent, where, after waiting a couple of hours, we were loaded with a variety of articles, including the tent itself. We then took our place in a long line of animals, and marched along, our Hindostan driver holding the first of our string of three by his halter rope.

As our string passed in front of a large group of mounted officers, I heard a voice say, "Fall out, the lot with the bright chesnut!" and our driver turned us off the road. We were then unloaded, and several remarks passed upon the collection we bore. One officer, whose eyes seemed to pierce everything on which they turned, said, "Look! what are on these three animals for the comfort of a single member of the force. There is a tent for the sahib, and a small tent for the servants, there is bedding, a bedstead, a table, a chair, and a gun case; there are enough cooking utensils to prepare food for half a score, a sponge bath, and a case holding a dozen of Henessey's brandy. That deal box I know holds pounds upon pounds of preserved meat, and those two bullock trunks will contain clothes enough to last for a couple of years. Then there is a lot of horse clothing, and of course the servants have followed suit, and instead of carrying their own kits have stowed as much upon the animals as ought to suffice for a captain. All this must be changed when we start from Antalo. The native servants must be sent back, and each officer rigidly confined to seventy-five pounds of luggage. Indeed, if a rapid push is required, all must be left behind, and nothing except a little bedding taken on, for any one, no matter what his rank."

I will pass over my adventures of the following months, in which nothing occurred worth record. Enough to say that I bore a variety of saddles and lived upon a short allowance of every species of grain grown in Abyssinia. The history would be imperfect, however, if I did not say candidly that there usually was plenty.

The favourite manœuvre of the drivers was to slip off the line of march, make a hole in the ground, put into it lighted tobacco, and cover it up, leaving open only a small hole through which they would insert a pipe-stem, which was passed from mouth to mouth, each

smoker taking half a dozen whiffs, this they called hubble-bubble.

It may be wondered how, in such a rough land, with bad care, little corn, and an atmosphere unfavourable to violent exercise, we were able to do our work. The secrets were two; first, we were lightly laden, carrying only two hundred pounds, including the saddle, in place of the three hundred generally borne in Spain; secondly, when a mule fell dead there were always others at hand to take his place.

Immense numbers of us died on the wayside, or were put out of pain by a pistol-shot through the brain. On my homeward journey, I saw within a few hundred yards of the ridge of each mountain we traversed the corpses of at least twenty of my kind, and five or six in most of the small streams we crossed. There scarcely was a mile of road in which I did not see half-a-dozen carcases.

THE DIVERSIONS OF LA SOLEDAD.

The Imperial Mexican railway, in the year 1864, was in its infancy. The entire line of route had been carefully surveyed, and beautifully mapped out; all engineering difficulties had been disposed of, on paper, and vast numbers of labourers were employed on cuttings and embankments, but nine-tenths of the line yet remained to be made. A considerable impetus had been given to all kinds of industry in the normally distracted country just then. The unfortunate Maximilian had accepted the crown from the commission of Mexican "notables" who waited on him at Miramar; and General Almonte had been appointed president of a Council of Regency until "El Principe," as the emperor elect was called, should arrive. As for Don Benito Juarez, he was nobody, and, in sporting parlance, might be said to be "nowhere." He was supposed to be hiding his diminished head in the neighbourhood of Brownsville, on the frontier of Texas, and I have heard him spoken of innumerable times by Mexican politicians (who are, I dare say, very ardent Juarists by this time), in the most contemptuous terms. The mildest epithet with which he was qualified was "El Indio," the Indian: President Juarez having scarcely any European blood in his veins. More frequently he was called "the bandit," or the "banished despot."

So everything looked very bright and hopeful in Mexico; a strong French force occupying the country; and the railway (which was already open for traffic as far as La Soledad) was being pushed forward towards Paso de Macho. We jogged along pretty steadily in our omnibus car; but, until we reached a place called Manga de Clavo, I thought that Mexico must be the counterpart of the Egyptian desert. For miles the line was skirted by sandhills. There were more sandhills in the middle distance, and the extreme horizon was bounded by sandhills; the whole of which, illumined by a persistently ferocious sunshine, offered the reverse of an encouraging prospect. Luckily there was no sirocco, or the sand would have invaded the carriage and choked us.

But with magical rapidity the scene changed, and the desert bloomed into fruitfulness amazing. The train plunged into a densely wooded country. We saw thick clumps of trees spangled with blossoms or bending under the load of bright hued tropical fruits; the foreground was literally one parterre of variegated flowers, and the "cow-catcher" of the engine scattered roses as we marched. I began to warm into enthusiasm. We hurried by palm trees, cocoa-nut trees, lemon and orange groves, and forests of the banana. That tree with its broad blood-stained leaves, and its body reft and bent by the last hurricane and the last rainstorm, swaying and bulging, but abating not one jot of its ruby ruddiness, should furnish a potent liquor; but the fruit of the banana is in reality very mild and suave; conveying to the mind, in its dulcet mawkishness, the idea of sweet shaving paste. It is most tolerable when fried, and served as a savoury dish. And here I may remark that the majority of tropical fruits are productive of most grievous disappointment when eaten. From the shaddock downward, I don't think I met any which caused me to think disparagingly of the grand avenue at Covent Garden in London, or of the Marché St. Honoré in Paris. Abnormal size is the principal characteristic of tropical fruits. They are intensely sweet; but the saccharine matter has an ugly propensity to turn acid on the stomach and kill you. The flavour is generally flaccid and insipid. From this general censure must be always excepted the *sweet* lemon—not the lime—a most exquisitely toothsome fruit.

Ever and anon, in the density of this new and delicious landscape, there would occur an opening, revealing a little valley vividly green, studded with flowers, and perchance with a few scattered wigwams built of palm branches and thatched with palm leaves. The Indian women in their simple costume—almost invariably consisting of two articles, a chemise of coarse white cotton-cloth called "manta" and a narrow petticoat-skirt of red and black, or black and yellow striped stuff—looked, at a distance, picturesque enough. Round about all the palm-branch wigwams there were seen to be sprawling groups of Indian piccaninnies of the precise hue of roast fowls well done. Their costume was even more simple than that of their mammas. Mexican scenery, save where the massive mountain passes intervene, is one continuous alternation. Now comes a belt so many miles broad of wonderful fertility. Indian corn—the stalks as tall as beadle's staves, the cobs as large as cricket bats—oranges, lemons, bananas, sugar, coffee, cotton, rice, cinnamon, nutmegs, and all manner of spices. Then, for many more miles, you have a belt of absolute barrenness, a mere sandy desert. What I saw of Mexico reminded me of a tiger's skin—dull yellow desert barred with rich dark brown

stripes of fertility. The land is like a Sahara diversified by slices from the valley of Kashmir.

The sun was throwing very long blue shadows indeed from the objects which skirted our track, when we brought up at a straggling structure of deal boards, palm branches, and galvanised tinned iron, or zinc sheds, which did duty as the railway terminus of La Soledad. We found a number of very hospitable gentlemen waiting to receive us; the sleepy telegraphic operator at Vera Cruz having apparently made himself sufficiently wide awake to notify our coming. He had done us good service. A cordial welcome and a good dinner awaited us. Our hosts were the engineers and surveyors engaged on the works of the railway; and the engineer is always well off for commissariat supplies. He is the only foreigner, the only invader, on whom the rudest and most superstitious races look without disfavour; for, from the lord of the neighbouring manor, to the parish priest—nay, to the meanest day labourer—everybody has a dim impression that the bridge, or the aqueduct, or the railway, will do the country good, and that every inhabitant of the district will, sooner or later, "get something out of it."

Our friends of La Soledad were accomplished gentlemen, full of the traditions of Great George-street, Westminster; pioneers from the Far West; rough Lancashire gangers and hard-handed Cornishmen. They were banded together, by the responsibilities of a common undertaking, and by the consciousness of a common danger; for, until within the last few weeks, every man had worked with his life in his hand. The station of La Soledad had been attacked by banditti, over and over again, and it had been a common practice with the guerrilleros to lie in wait in the jungle, and "pot" the passengers in passing trains. Even now, the little group were lamenting the loss of their managing engineer, who had been shot while riding along an unfinished portion of the line. "The colonel lasted six days after they'd hit him," an American overseer of workmen told me; "and it was a desperate cruel thing, seeing that he left a wife and three small children; but he'd had a good time, I guess, the colonel had. 'Brown,' he ses, turning to me, and clasping my hand as he lay on the mattress in that hut over yonder, 'they've done for me at last; but I reckon I've shot eight of 'em since last fall.' And so he had."

There were two other points in which our railway friends were cheerfully unanimous. They all concurred in despising the Mexicans, and disliking the French. "As for the half-castes and Spaniards," the American overseer remarked, "they're right down scallywaggs. Hanging's too good for 'em; and the only thing that makes me bear the French, is, that when they catch a Mexican guerrillero, they cowhide him first, and shoot him afterwards, and hang him up as a climax. As for the Injuns, they're poor weak-kneed creatures; but there's no harm in 'em. About a hundred will do the work of ten stout Irishmen. I used to try licking of 'em at first, to make 'em spry; but, bless you! they don't mind licking. They just lie down on the turf like mules. Well I recollect how the mayoral of a diligencia makes his team to go when they're stubborn; he just gets down and walks behind, and he fills his pocket with sharp little stones, and every now and then he shies a stone which hits a mule behind the ear, and he cries, 'Ha-i-a-youp!' and the mule he shakes his head, and gallops along full split. When I see my Indian peons shirking their work, I just sit on a stone about fifty yards off, and every minute or so I let one of 'em have a pebble underneath the left ear. The crittur wriggles like an eel in a pump-log, and falls a working as though he was going to build Babel before sundown."

Why the French should have been so intensely disliked I could not rightly determine. That the Mexicans should have hated them was feasible enough; but I rarely found an Englishman or a German in Mexico who would give the army of occupation a good word. I have frequently expressed my opinion that a Frenchman in a black coat, in light pantaloons, in straw-coloured kid gloves, in a blouse and sabots, even, is a most agreeable, friendly, light-hearted creature; but make his acquaintance when he is on active service, in a képi and scarlet pantaloons, and I fear you will find that a more arrogant, and a more rapacious swashbuckler does not exist. That is the character, at least, which the French warrior has gotten in Mexico, in Algeria, in Germany, in Italy—his transient spell of popularity in '59 excepted—and in Spain.

I remember that the ragged assemblage of maize, and palm-straw, and mud, and wattle huts, which forms the town of La Soledad lay in the midst of a broad valley, the sides shelving to a rocky base, through which ran a shallow river. I came to this place on the last day of February. There had been heavy rains a few days previously, and there was some water, but not much, in the bed of the river. In the summer, the rivers of Mexico are as dry as the Paglione at Nice; and the bridges seem as useless as spurs to the military gentlemen in garrison at Venice. There was a detachment of French infantry at La Soledad, whose cheerful bugles were summoning the wearers of about two hundred pairs of red trousers to the evening repast, of which "ratatouille," a kind of gipsy stew, forms the staple ingredient. This evening meal is called the "ordinaire," and is made up of the leavings of the day's rations, and of such odds and ends of victual as the soldiers have managed to purchase or forage. There is no such evening entertainment in the British army. Our men eat their clumsily cooked rations in a hurry, and often pass long hours of hunger between their ill-arranged meals. The bugle-calls of the French brought from the shingly shores of the river numbers of moustached warriors who had been washing their shirts and gaiters—socks were not worn by the army of occupation—in the stream. It was very pretty to watch the red-legged figures winding along the paths running upward through the valley, with boards laden with white

linen on their heads. There was a grand background to the picture in a mountain range, rising tier above tier: not in blue delicate peaks and crags, as in the Alps, but in solid, sullen, dun-coloured masses. I can recal one now, with ribbed flanks, and a great shelving head, that looked like an old brown lion, couchant.

The railway gentlemen resided at a little cantonment of timber and corrugated zinc huts, the last of which, although weather-tight and agreeably repellant of various insects (which swarm in wooden structures), were, when the sun shone, intolerably hot. As the sun so shone habitually, without mercy from eight in the morning until six in the evening, the corrugated zinc huts became by sunset so many compact ovens, suited either to baking, broiling, or stewing, the inmates. However, life in Mexico amounts, in the long run, only to a highly varied choice of evils; and devouring insects being somewhat more aggravating than a warm room, the engineers had chosen that evil which they deemed the lesser. I suffered so terribly, however, during my sojourn in this highly rarefied country from determination of blood to the head that I entreated my hosts to be allowed to sleep under a palm thatch in lieu of corrugated zinc. My wish was acceded to—to my partial destruction.

We dined sumptuously on hot stews, made much hotter with chiles and "peperos," the effect of which last condiment on the palate I can only compare to that of a small shrapnel shell going off in your mouth. We had plenty of sound claret, and, if I remember right, a flask or so of that white-seal champagne, which at transatlantic tables is considered to be many degrees preferable to Veuve Cliquot. A bottle of "Sunnyside" Madeira, warranted from a Charleston "garret," was also produced. We were too recently from Havana to be unprovided with Señor Anselmo del Valle's fragrant merchandise; and, let me whisper to the wanderer, that he who spares no efforts to be provided with good cigars in his baggage, will be at least enabled to make some slight return for the hospitality he will receive. For, in these far-distant cantonments the stock of cigars is liable to run out, and can with difficulty be renewed.

After dinner we talked Mexican politics—a conversation which generally resolved itself into three conclusions. First, that when things come to the worst, they may mend. Second, that things had come to the worst in Mexico. Third, that Maximilian and his empire might last as long as the French occupation continued, and as long as his own stock of gold ounces and hard dollars held out. I can aver that on this last head I never heard any more sanguine opinion expressed during the whole time I was in Mexico. Then we played a hand at poker, and tried a rubber at whist, then songs were sung, and then we went out for a walk. The French tattoo had sounded, and most of the moustachioed warriors had retired to their huts; but there were strong pickets patrolling the streets, and double guards posted at every gate. When I speak of the "gates" of this place, I allude simply to certain booms or logs of timber placed athwart blocks of stone at certain intervals, and by the side of each of which was a French guard hut. When I allude to La Soledad's "streets," I mean simply that the palm-branch and mud-and-wattle huts of the Indian and half-caste population had been erected in two parallel lines, with a few alleys of smaller hovels, with succursals of dung-hills branching from them. Once upon a time I believe La Soledad had possessed a "plaza," several stone houses, and two churches; but all that kind of thing had been, to use the invariable American locution when speaking of the ravages of civil war, "knocked into a cocked-hat" by contending partisans.

In La Soledad, we lived in an easy fashion. We dined without any table-cloth, and with a great many more knives than forks. We occasionally carved a fowl with a bowie-knife. Our claret had been drawn direct from the wood into calabashes of potters' ware, kneaded and fired on the spot, and the white-seal champagne had been opened by the simple process of knocking the neck off the bottles. It was very unconventional when we sallied forth on a stroll to see the mats which served as doors to the Indian huts all drawn on one side, and the inmates making their simple preparations for retiring for the night, such preparations consisting chiefly in everybody taking off what little he had on, and curling himself up in a ball on the straw-littered ground. The family mule was tethered to a post outside, and the background was filled up by the family pigs and poultry. It was the county of Tipperary with a dash of a Bedouin douar, and a poetic tinge of the days of the Shepherd Kings of Palestine. Everybody had, however, not gone to bed. There was life at La Soledad; life half of a devotional, half of a dissolute kind. The stone churches, as I have said, had been "knocked into a cocked-hat," but Ave Maria was sounding on a little cracked bell suspended between three scaffold-poles, and a dusky congregation—all Indians—were kneeling on the threshold of a wigwam somewhat larger, but fully as rudely fashioned, as its neighbours, where an Indian priest was singing vespers. There could not have been a more unconventional church. The poor celebrant was desperately ragged and dirty, and his vestments were stuck over with little spangles and tarnished scraps of foil paper; but he had a full, sonorous voice which seemed to thrill his hearers strangely. Two great twisted torches of yellow wax were placed on the altar, which looked like a huge sea-chest. Another torch, of some resinous wood, flamed at the entrance of the hut, and threw the kneeling worshippers into Rembrandt-like masses of light and shade. On the altar were the usual paltry little dolls—not much paltrier than you may see in the most superb fanes in Italy or Spain—but there was singularly unconventional ornament. The poor curé of the church, I was told, had

waited on the railway officials and begged for something to adorn his fabric withal: something "European" the honest man wanted. They had given him a few dollars, and a couple of those enormous coloured lamps which at night are fixed in front of locomotives. One of these, a red one, another a green one, he had fixed on either side of his altar; and there they were glaring out of the wigwam like two unearthly eyes. Close to the church was a public gaming-house, to justify Defoe's

> Wherever God erects a house of prayer,
> The Devil always builds a chapel there.

It was contemptuously tolerated by the French, on condition that no soldier of their natlon should be suffered to play in it, and that if any knives were used on the disputed question of a turn-up card, the proprietor should be liable to be hanged. But the Mexicans are admirable gamesters, and very rarely stab over their play. They prefer lying in wait for you in the dark, and admonishing you, by a puncture under the fifth rib, or a ball in the occiput, that you had best not be so lucky at cards next time. The gambling-house had nothing of the conventional Frascati or German Kursaal aspect about it. It was just a long wigwam, open in front, and with some rough planks on tressels running along its whole length. It reminded me of a hastily improvised refreshment booth at a cricket match. There was no "Tapis vert," unless the sward on which the tressels rested could pass muster as a "green carpet." There were no pure Indians present. Gambling, cheating and robbing are the business of the Spanish half-castes. These exemplary gentry lined the long table, erect, statuesque in their striped blankets and great coach-wheel hats, motionless, save when they extended their their long skinny hands to plant their stakes, or to grasp their winnings. With the exception of an occasional hoarse cry of "Tecoloti"—referring to a chance in the game—"Gaño todo," "I win all," or "Pierde el Soto," "the knave loses," there was silence. The game was Monté, of which it is sufficient to say that it bears a vague affinity to lansquenet and to blind hookey, and is about one hundred times more speculatively ruinous than vingt-un or unlimited loo. At La Soledad the stakes were dollars, halves, and quarters, and even copper coins. I saw one man win about five pounds on a turn-up. He lost all and more within the next five minutes, and stalked away apparently unconcerned: whether to bed, or to hang himself, or to wait for a friend and murder him, I had no means of ascertaining. Not many days afterwards I had the honour of being present at several entertainments, of which Monté was the object, in the City of Mexico. There we were quite conventional. We gathered in full evening dress. We had wax lights, powdered footmen, and cool beverages handed round on silver salvers. In lieu of the poor little silver and copper stakes of La Soledad, the piles of gold ounces and half doubloons rose to a monumental height; but there was no difference in the good breeding of the players. The blanketed rapscallions of La Soledad were just as phlegmatic over their Monté as the wealthiest dons in Mexico.

We watched this small inferno for some time; and I was much amused to observe that one of the most sedulous of the punters was a gaunt half-caste boy who, in a ragged shirt and raggeder drawers, had waited on us at dinner. The young reprobate must have risked a year's wages on every turn-up; but his employers did not seem to think that there was anything objectionable in his having adjourned from the dining-room to the gambling-table.

About ten o'clock the establishment was closed in a very summary manner by a French patrol, who marched along the length of the booth, sweeping out the noble sportsmen before them as though with a broom that had a bayonet in it. And life at La Soledad being terminated, we went to bed. For my part I sincerely wish I had walked about all night, or had lain down in front of the great fire by the French guard-house. I must needs sleep in a wooden hut with a palm thatch, and I was very nearly bitten to death. There were mosquitoes; there were fleas; there were cockroaches—unless they were scorpions—and, finally, oh, unutterable horror! there were *black ants*. I sometimes fancy that a few of those abominable little insects are burrowing beneath my skin, to this day.

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BY

MR. CHARLES DICKENS.

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HESTER'S HISTORY.

A New Serial Tale.

CHAPTER I. LITTLE HESTER.

I would begin by telling how it came that little Hester once lived in Fairyland and was banished; and in order to do so I would open this history into the midst of July sunshine, and all the summer glory of the gardens at Hampton Court. Not on a public holiday, that I may ask a reader to watch with me the city children casting bread to the swans, and stare over the heads of the crowd at the noble cartoons, and Elizabeth's wan face and ruff. But because there be people who have their homes in the heart of this fairyland of history, who eat their daily bread, and dream their nightly dreams under the palace roof. And because there be days when the birds make all the sound in the dreamy alleys, the flowers are sweet only for the bees, the swans doze undisturbed among the lilies, and the pictured company upon the walls in the show chambers have neither student nor admirer from sunrise till sunset; nothing moving amongst them but shadows and sunbeams throughout the long lonely day.

On such a day about eighty years ago, a lady was sitting at an open window looking out on the great court-yard, and a little girl was playing all by herself up and down the king's staircase, and in and out those long pictured chambers, where an old woman was going slowly from room to room, on her knees, scrubbing the boards. When tired of chasing the sunbeams up and down the stair, "climbing the gold ladders" she called her game, this child would come and sit down in the middle of the floor, and, clasping her knees, talk up to the pictures, to Mary and Darnley and the rest, asking them why they looked so grave, and staid up there, so silent, on the prim walls; assuring them that they should find the world outside very delightful with flowers and trees, if they would only step forth and try it. These painted people were so real and familiar to this child, and those of sad stern faces and stiff bearing touched her pity so much, that she talked quite aloud to them for sympathy. The old charwoman, catching the murmuring treble of the little voice, would come grumbling to the door now and again, and looking askance uneasily at the yellow head shining solitary in the middle of the great chamber, would listen in amazement to the small eager tongue that discoursed so nimbly and fantastically in the silence.

The lady at the window not far away was Judith, Lady Humphrey, widow of Sir John Humphrey, a distinguished naval officer. She was a middle-aged lady, tall and narrow in figure, with shapely features, and light hair, like braids of buff-coloured satin. She might have been considered handsome but for her mouth, which was ugly; chiefly, perhaps, because sweetness was unknown to it. There was also a drawback to beauty in the cold yet restless expression of her colourless eyes, whose pale sharp light was unsoftened by even the lightest pencilling of shadow. People who knew her well could have told that her manners would have been attractive but for occasional tones in her voice. And probably it was owing to these three characteristics—the curious light in her eyes, the corners of her mouth, and those odd tones turning up now and again when she was speaking—that no child, not even the little orphan who clung to her perforce, and who made idols of dim faces upon canvas for want of something warmer to love, could ever get its arms around her neck, or have courage to lift its face to her lips.

This lady was writing to her son, Pierce, at his military college. An open letter, in a careless dashing hand, lay spread on the desk before her, and she turned back a page, and read.

"I am glad," said the writing, "that you got the pearl necklace and the buckles for little Hester. I know how much amusement it gives you to see the little monkey looking pretty and picturesque. I will do without the money if I can——"

The lady here turned from this letter to her own, and began writing with a bold, impatient hand.

"You speak," she said on the paper, "as if you had forgotten that your father was a gentleman, and that you also are expected to be the same. You talk about doing without money, as if that were possible, and allude to Hester's necklace as if its purchase must prevent your debts being paid. I only mentioned that item to show you how difficult it is to find money for everything. I have pawned the diamonds which your grandfather gave me before you were born, and though they were never a

handsome set, the ear-rings being too short, and the brooch an awkward pattern, still they are valuable, and I send you the sum you require. As for Hester, the child is getting tiresome, and teases me with her questions. I have heard of a cheap school to which I think of sending her. It is almost a charity school, indeed; but I cannot afford a better one, and I dare say it will do for the creature very well."

Did the soldier boy smile or sigh when these lines came under his eyes, or had he leisure in the hurry of his own young life to pause and ruminate on the mystery of a pearl necklace and a charity school? One might wonder a little looking over this letter, seeing that Lady Humphrey had a determined appearance, and that one is apt to associate determination of character with strength of mind, or at least with common sense. But Lady Humphrey was as determined in her indulgence of her smallest personal whims as in the dauntless carrying out of her most audacious plans.

Hester Cashel was utterly friendless except in so far as Lady Humphrey had stood and meant to stand her friend. Some one had died abroad, and bequeathed an infant to the cold-eyed lady. What motives were at work to make the owner of so hard a voice open her heart and take the child in, has never been clearly ascertained by any one. People said she did open her heart; but I am disposed to think that she only extended her arms, maybe held out a reluctant hand, or a finger. But even a finger is enough for a toddling baby to grasp, and hold on by with its two tiny hands. And so this orphan became the property of Lady Humphrey.

The woman's husband was dead, her son necessarily removed from her, and she herself was not the sort of person to win her way into new hearts and draw them near her own. It followed naturally that the babe Hester, growing a strong and graceful child, should prove an interest and an amusement to her protectress. Her beauty had pleased the lady, and her prattle diverted her for some seven or eight years. She had been decked and flattered, indulged and neglected, trained and drilled, and left to run wild again, according to the humour and circumstances of Lady Humphrey. There had lately arrived a time, however, when the soul that was in the child had began to trouble the worldly woman. Hester was growing too thoughtful, too questioning, too fanciful, too "old fashioned." Even the sight of the pretty figure, tricked out in trinkets and satins, did not compensate for the annoyance of the child's earnestness. So long as the small lisping voice would content itself with trilling sentimental ditties accompanied by chubby fingers thrumming a guitar, to the delight of Lady Humphrey and her visitors, it was all very well, and the clever little mite was charming. But it did not amuse Lady Humphrey to hear the words of wisdom coming out of the lips of a babe, nor did it please her at all to be convicted of ignorance by the truthful troubled gaze of two spiritual eyes, looking out of even so tiny a puzzled head. The child, too, was becoming less gay and lively, and getting a habit which the lady could not endure, a trick of talking to herself and to lifeless things. And it was this simple folly of the little one that sealed her childish fate at the last.

For on the evening of that summer day on which a letter was written mentioning a humble school, Lady Humphrey, after some seeking, found the missing Hester among the pictures alone, and it was almost dark. The child was leaning softly towards a dusky canvas, from which a pale face just glimmered through the shadows. "Come out, Mary Stuart," she was whispering, with her hands extended pleadingly towards the picture, "Come out, Mary Stuart, and hear the nightingales!"

The witness of this scene, the lady on whose mouth there had never been any sweetness, felt forcibly that a whole ocean of mystery lay between the opening nature of this child and her own, which was grown and matured, and never could know change. And she wanted to get the child out of her sight. And next day she drove to a dingy house in Islington to make inquiries. And very soon little Hester was carried away out of her dreams under the shadow of the great palace, from her talks with her dear kings and queens, and her raptures at the singing of the nightingales. And this is how little Hester was banished from Fairyland.

Her anguish and fear were terrible at first; they frightened the children of the school and wearied the mistress. But a week of punishment tamed the little spirit, and Hester settled meekly to her lessons in the schoolroom. With pale cheeks and shadows round her eyes she announced herself "very happy," by and by, over her books. She hemmed some ruffles for Lady Humphrey and wrote her a letter. And the lady did not quite desert her. She missed the little presence about her more than she had expected. Besides, she was at this time much vexed by the failure of speculations, of cherished plans for the enrichment of her son, and sometimes needed a novelty to distract her thoughts. She called often at the dingy house, and brought Hester back to her paradise. It amused her to see the half-laughing, half-weeping ecstasy of the child at sight of the country. Not a wreath in the hedge, not a green-breasted duck among the sedges missed her eye, or was too simple a subject for her joy. Lady Humphrey could understand clapping of hands and merriment, and as gradually the little girl grew shrewd enough to keep her wonders and fancies to herself, and to refrain from asking difficult questions, she was found to be exceedingly improved, and a much less tiresome companion than she had been.

Thus she lived, henceforth, a strange two-sided sort of life. At her school she was driven about harshly enough, shrieked at and scolded for the smallest fault; mocked by rude schoolfellows for her daintier habits. Her garments

became slovenly and her hair unkept. Her recreation was making cockle-shell grottoes in a gaunt back yard with high walls. Yet here she existed contentedly, feeding her imagination upon history lessons, till wondrously at a moment's notice, there would appear the magic finger beckoning her into the land of enchantment. And the next day, with smooth ringlets, and in the delicate white clothing she liked to wear, little Hester would find her way back into the stately company of her pictured friends, and revelling in the congenial atmosphere of beauty and refinement, would make herself as rapturously happy as it is possible for a lonely child to be. Then were there no tasks to be learned, and no occupation was appointed for her, but only the following of her sweet will from morning till night among the flowers and pictures.

But too soon this brilliant heaven was overcast. At a moment's notice, and Lady Humphrey's word, back again she was dropped into the lower life. The smoky city received her once more, and the door of the dreary house shut her in. Here were waiting for her just as she had left them—the close blank yard and the rude companions, the threadbare frock and the shoes with the holes in them, the angry word and the hasty punishment, the rigid monotony and the utter unloveliness and unyieldingness of everything and person, which yearning eyes might look upon or helpless hands lay hold of. There were quarrelsome voices for the singing of the nightingales; a patch of rank weeds, instead of acres of scent and bloom; boisterous humanity for delicate dream creations, and slow movements and a cramped will in exchange for a royal liberty of foot and fancy.

In her earlier days the woe of the little heart found its comfort in tears, and, the passion of the moment over, the child would content itself, child-fashion, with whatever materials for amusement might lie in the way. But when a few years had passed, and an unusual capacity for grief had grown stronger within her, the sudden change in her life became more painful, the conversations of her schoolfellows more irksome, tears were less frequent with her; but a grave trouble grew up in her young life, the trouble of not knowing where her place was to be in the world. For with a true instinct Hester felt early that she had won no place in Lady Humphrey's heart, that her footing on that enchanted hearthstone under the palace roof was dependent on the humour of each moment that passed. And with a sure foreboding, she felt that any day might find her shaken off and forgotten.

CHAPTER II. HESTER, SOMEWHAT LATER.

When Hester was twelve years old, she had rather advanced in Lady Humphrey's favour. Her progress in learning had pleased the lady, and she had sent her to a better school. The gratitude of the little girl was unbounded, and her efforts to profit by the boon incessant. See her bending over a book in a schoolroom—flushed, eager; her frock out at elbows, her shoes broken, her stockings overrun with darns. To-morrow she will be at the palace, and there must be a brave list of triumphs for Lady Humphrey. A medal is to be won, and some solemn books, and Lady Humphrey will look pleased. She will not smile much; but she will put on a satisfied look, and say approvingly, "Hester, you will be of use for something yet." And the vague promise of that something in prospect is sweet to Hester as the birds in the boughs.

And a fresh white frock will be handed to Hester, and it will be delicately frilled and crimped; and there will be, if not exactly glass slippers, at least pretty ones of black silk with shining buckles. And there will be Shakespeare on the drawing-room table, the mark in its pages never moved since Hester closed the volume last holiday. And she will nestle in the firelight by the glittering hearthplace with the book. And perhaps she will suddenly start to find that unconsciously her fancy has been clothing Lady Macbeth with the outward form and features of Lady Humphrey. And she will shudder and veil her eyes, lest her patroness should read the cruel libel in her glance. But the lady does not think of her so often, nor look at her so closely as to notice when a cloud or a shining light is to be seen on her eager face.

Then in the evening the stiff brocade curtains (so different from Miss Hemisphere's dull green damask) will be drawn across the windows, and the wax candles will be lit all through the rare chambers, and the fire will pour its ruddy splendour over the curious andirons, burning grandly and with dignity as a fire should burn under the roof where kings and queens have made their home. And the few dark pictures on the walls will retire farther than ever into obscurity, and only just peer in ghostly fashion from their frames. On the table in the corner with its cover of Indian embroidery will be set forth the tiny, exquisite service of china and silver in which Lady Humphrey is wont to dispense tea to her guests. And the lady's little page in his fantastic costume will be tripping about, arranging seats in expectation of visitors. Lady Humphrey does not see company on an extended scale however. A few antique beaux and dowagers will drink her coffee and play whist at her card tables. And of these, though Hester has seen them coming and going for years, and knows every nodding, powdered head and painted smirk by heart, as she does the pictures in the gallery, yet she recognises the identity of not a single one amongst them. They are all illustrious personages of history, the guests of bygone kings.

The first blush of morning will find her abroad, encountering his dread majesty upon the king's staircase. For the fierce Henry and his great cardinal walking about Hampton Court are as familiar to her as Miss Hemisphere or Lady Humphrey. Elizabeth will hold a pageant at high noon in the greenwood, and later, Lady Jane Grey reveals herself,

musing melancholy in some quiet haunt, weaving herself and her sorrows into a poem for the reading of ages. And when twilight comes on, and the trees stand shadowless in the cool air, and the crimson begins to grow brown, and the violet black, in the darkening window of the great hall, then Hester, returning homeward by some shrouded alley, where the walls of olive foliage are draped in a purple mist and unseen birds sing lullabies to all nature, will find a weird ghostly troop coming out to meet her. Anne Boleyn is here in all her splendour, and the hoary trees sigh and shake their heads as she goes past. Wicked Henry, too, strides along, frowning, with the ghost of a murdered wife on either hand. There is a shadow and a whisper of every heart-broken thing that ever might have stolen from the gilded prison of that palace, to flutter wild about here with its anguish, sobbing to the singing of these nightingales. Thus ghouls and gnomes have grown up within the paradise.

It was at this time of her life that Hester gathered up all her childish strength and made an effort to crave the love of her protectress. It was not much for the child to ask, but it was too much for the woman to bestow. And who shall blame her? That which one has not got, how shall one give it away. Hester arrived one day breathless and panting, her arms full of prizes, a medal in her hand. She could not speak, but emptied the treasures in Lady Humphrey's lap.

"Softly, softly, child!" said Lady Humphrey. "Such sudden movements are very unladylike. Now take these things away. I am quite content. This is nothing but what I have expected."

And this was nothing but what Hester had expected also, yet her heart was crying out for something more. She went swiftly and suddenly down on her knees, and with passionate tears besought that the dear madam would love her, "just a little." And then she knelt trembling and sobbing in terror at her own boldness.

"Hester!" said Lady Humphrey, in her iciest tones, "I beg that you will not make yourself ridiculous. I had hoped that you had given up these childish vagaries. What more would you have than I give you? There is no one in the world from whom you have the right to claim sixpence, and yet I feed you, clothe you, and keep you at school."

"Yes," said Hester, suddenly checking her wild sobs, and becoming quite still.

"You cannot expect these favours to continue all your life. It is better then for you to make much of them while they last, than to disturb yourself about nothing, crying like a great baby for more than you can get."

"Yes," said Hester, more steadily.

"And let me warn you," added Lady Humphrey, quite roused by the successful impression she was making, "that people who go through the world moaning about love, are only pretty sure to get laughed at for their pains. So take these things away, child, and go and wash your face."

And Hester took up her hard-won prizes and packed them all away into a dark corner. And she came back with a very quiet face, and nothing more was said upon this subject.

But there was a difference in Hester from that hour forth, and after three silent days she spoke again.

"Lady Humphrey," she said, "will you tell me, please, what is to become of me when I am grown up?"

Lady Humphrey paused a few moments before she answered, as if considering the child attentively, her age, her manner, and her possible meaning. Then she said,

"I believe you will have to earn your bread."

"How am I to earn it, please, my lady?" said little Hester, eagerly.

"As a teacher, perhaps," said Lady Humphrey; "if I can afford to keep you long enough at school. Perhaps as a dressmaker."

Hester lowered her head, and retired, without a word, to her seat in the corner. Her eyes wandered round the handsome chamber, and her fingers went feeling to the dainty pearl necklace round her throat. Gradually she unloosed the fastenings as she sat, and the ornament lay glistening in her lap for a silent hour. Then she was again at the lady's elbow with the necklace in her hand.

"I would rather not wear this any more," she said.

"What do you mean, you strange creature?" said Lady Humphrey, rather provoked and much surprised. "But you must wear it," she added. "I intend that you shall wear it at my pleasure. Put it on."

Hester obeyed, but still kept standing, as if all had not been said. Her hands were pressed together, so were her lips. The lady went on writing, as forgetting the child's presence.

"If you please, Lady Humphrey, may I go back to school to-morrow?"

"What, now?" said Lady Humphrey, frowning darkly. "Will you tell me what is the meaning of this new idea?"

"If you please, Lady Humphrey, I would rather be a teacher."

"You shall at all times do just as I command you," said her ladyship, in her hardest tones. "Leave the room now, to begin with."

And Hester vanished at the word, and sought refuge among the pictures, weeping bitterly to her dear Mary Stuart.

After this she made rapid progress at her studies, and was left a whole year undisturbed in her schoolroom. At the end of that time Lady Humphrey had need of her, and she sent for her to come to Hampton Court. A carriage arrived at Miss Hemisphere's door, and the coachman had a note for the schoolmistress. Hester was packed into the coach without delay, and went wondering all the way to her destination. Lady Humphrey met her with more feeling in her manner than Hester had ever seen in it before.

"My son," she explained, "is shut up in a dark room yonder. His eyes have been injured by a hot blast in India, and he is not allowed to see. You must read to him, amuse him, help him to pass the time."

Hester promised to do her best, and was taken to the darkened chamber. Poor Pierce was extended upon a sofa, with his head tied up in bandages. Nothing was to be seen of his face, but a very rueful mouth and some black whiskers. Hester was obliged to make herself and her errand known, for Lady Humphrey was with the doctors in the drawing-room.

"Please, Mr. Humphrey," said Hester, "I am come to amuse you."

The rueful mouth broke into a broad smile. "Are you, indeed?" it said; "I am glad to hear it, I am sure, and I must say you have made a very fair beginning. And who are you, might I ask?"

"My name is Hester," said the girl, "and I come from Miss Hemisphere's school."

"Ah, little Hester! Well, you know I can't see you, but shake hands, little woman. Yes, that's a nice soft firm little hand, and I don't like the handling I get here, I can tell you. Nobody fit for a nurse to be had in these quarters, and the least jerk gives such confounded pain. You shall tie all my bandages, little Hester."

"Yes," said the little girl, and was as good as her word. And the young gentleman and she became great friends after that. She read him to sleep sometimes, and talked to him when he liked, and was a great little mother to Pierce Humphrey. And the young man, who was a kindly young man, grew very fond of her though he had never seen her face.

"I think you love me very much, little Hester," he said to her one day.

"Why?" asked Hester, in a wondering voice.

"Why? because you are so good to me," said the soldier. "Confess, do you not love me very much?"

"I like you as much as ever I can," said Hester, earnestly.

The young man bit his lip and reddened. The answer was not quite what he expected.

"Come!" he said, "what fault do you find with me? Am I not a handsome fellow enough?"

"You are very handsome," said Hester, gravely. "I never saw any one so handsome before."

The young man blushed again, this time with satisfaction.

"And am I not a good-natured chap?" he said, "and very grateful for all you are doing for me?"

"Oh, yes," said Hester, eagerly.

"What is it, then, little puss?"

"I think," said Hester, making a great effort, "that you swear too much at the pain and the doctors, who are doing a great deal for you. And I think you ought not to grumble as you do at Lady Humphrey."

"By Jove!" cried young Humphrey, and the mouth under his bandages began to widen, and the fragments of black whisker to tremble with laughter. "Well, well, little sweetheart!" he said, "I must try and mend my manners. And now, though you can lecture a fellow so well, perhaps you would not mind sharing his troubles?"

"What troubles?" asked Hester, anxiously.

"Oh, fearful troubles!" he said, with an air of desperation. "I have a terrible debt, and not a farthing to pay it with."

"What is to be done?" cried Hester, in distress. "Have you asked Lady Humphrey for the money?"

The young man groaned. "She would not give me a penny," he said, very deeply in his chest; "not if I went upon my knees to her. But, perhaps," he added, bent upon trying how far the little girl would go to serve him—"perhaps she would do it if you asked her."

Hester turned pale, but this he could not see. "I don't think she would listen to me at all," she said, trembling.

"Oh yes, she might," said Pierce Humphrey. "Will you promise me to try? It is my only hope," he added, tragically.

The next instant he heard Hester's light foot across the floor, and she was gone. Then Pierce Humphrey got a little anxious as to how his joke might end. He did want the money, but not that the child should get into trouble.

"Lady Humphrey," said little Hester, standing close to the lady's elbow; "if you please, Lady Humphrey, Mr. Pierce is in bad need of money."

"Is he indeed?" said her ladyship, sitting upright in her chair.

"Yes," said Hester, shaking with fear. "He wants a large sum of money to pay a debt. And I am sure, Lady Humphrey, that as you love him so much you will give it him, and not let him be unhappy."

"And pray, little madam," asked Lady Humphrey, with her hard mouth tightened, and her chin at a right angle with her throat, "when did you become my son's confidante?"

"He told me just now," said Hester, fading under the angry eyes, but not flinching.

"He did?" said Lady Humphrey; "yet he has not thought proper to mention the subject to his mother. I am to give *you* money for him because *I* love him so much. Pray, why do you presume that I love him so much? Do you love him yourself, little mistress?"

"No," said Hester, guiltily, hanging her head; "I like him very much, but I do not love him. But then," she added, apologetically, "you know I am not his mother, Lady Humphrey. If I were his mother, I am sure I should love him dearly; and I am sure I should give him everything he asked for."

Lady Humphrey took one long look at the pale, shrinking, persistent face, and said no more. She had a stormy scene with her son after that; but the debt (not so great as he had described it) was paid.

Pierce Humphrey's eyes were cured. Almost the first use he made of them was to take a peep of curiosity at his little nurse's face. Hester was sitting, unconscious, on her stool before the fire. It was a slender young figure, in the usual white frock. Her hair hung round her neck, a luminous cloud of curls, which were always getting cut, and always growing long. Her eyes were wide open and serious, fixed on the flaming wood. Her mouth was sweet; but tightened at the moment into an expression of almost pain. Her head leaned to one side in an attitude of attention. Her hands clasped her knee, an old babyish trick, which in a short time after this must be outgrown. It was the attitude of her infantine discourses to the pictures; her reveries of enthusiasm or trouble; her meditations.

She thought her patient was asleep. The fire flared and fell in. Burning spars lay scattered on the hearth. What terrible scene in her days that were to come was Hester foreseeing through the medium of this tumult and débris? Crash went the wood, and the tall flame was felled.

"Mother," said Pierce Humphrey next morning, "that little puss will be a beautiful woman."

"Will she?" said Lady Humphrey drily. And the next day Hester was sent back to her school.

Months passed away after that, and at last it did seem as though the time that Hester dreaded had arrived; and she felt herself shaken off and forgotten. The schoolmistress clamoured for the money that was her due, and Lady Humphrey listened, considered, remembered. Yes, to be sure, the little beggar must not starve. She ordered her carriage, and took her way to the school. A wild light of expectation sprang to Hester's eyes, as the well-known horses pulled up at the door, and she was quickly by the side of her benefactress. Ah, how tall, and awkward, and plain the girl had grown! Anxiety, it was true, had not beautified poor Hester. Her eyes had dark circles round them, and her cheeks were pale and thin. Her poor frocks were outgrown, making her look a grotesque figure.

"What is to be done?" said Lady Humphrey. "This creature must earn her bread."

LEAVES FROM THE MAHOGANY TREE.

GOURMANDS AND GORMANDISING.

The word the French use as a term, if not of honour, certainly of approval, is with us changed into a term of reproach: so much, even in small matters, do the two nations differ. The dictionary of the Academy defines a Gourmand, as Dr. Johnson also does, as synonymous with a glutton. In the Encyclopædia, gormandising is translated as "a demoralised love of good cheer;" but the Abbé Robaud, in his synonymes, is more favourable to gourmands, describing them as "persons who love to eat and make good cheer." They must eat, but not eat without selection. Below the judicious and self-restraining epicure, the sensible and tolerant abbé places four classes of people. First, the Friand, the person who likes all sorts of dainties, especially sweetmeats and dessert. The Goinfre is a monster who has an appetite so brutal that he swallows with ravening mouth everything he comes near; he eats and eats for the sake of eating. Next appears the Goulu (the shark), the wretch who snatches with avidity, swallows rather than eats, and gobbles rather than chews. Last of all comes that very discreditable creature the Glutton, who eats with an audible and disagreeable noise, and with such voracity that one morsel scarcely waits for another, and all disappears before him, absorbed as it were in a bottomless abyss. Such are the subtleties of the highly refined language of our neighbours. For all these expressions we have but the feeble epithets of epicure, alderman, greyhound, wolf. We are obliged, indeed, to borrow from the French, the two words Gourmand and Gourmet. By the first, meaning those who eat largely, without much regard to quality; by the second, those who study and appreciate the higher branches of cooking.

A friend of Dreikopf's has ascertained, after twenty years' experiments, that it takes thirty-two movements of the upper and lower jaws to cut and grind a morsel of meat sufficiently to allow it to be safely swallowed. The age and strength of the person, and the quality of the molars and incisors, are also, of course, to be taken into account, which drives one to algebra and vulgar fractions; but the rule is a good general one, and may be trusted to. This is philosophy indeed; and yet a man may use his teeth very well without knowing a word of it. It would not have helped that notorious eater, the Abbé de Liongeac, who, as the legend in Paris restaurants goes, would often for a wager eat thirty-six dozens of small pâtés. The abbé was, moreover, a little fragile-looking man, who looked as if a jelly would not melt in his mouth.

To be an epicure, a man should be rich; a poor epicure (unless he steal) must lead the life of twenty Tantaluses rolled into one. Elwes, the miser, was that unhappy creature: an epicure restrained from indulging in one vice, by the preponderance of another. People who laid traps for his rusty guineas used to bring him luxurious dishes, which he spoiled by his meanness. On one occasion a prudent lady sent the old miser a plate of richly stewed carp, of which he was known to be fond. It arrived cold. The difficulty was how to warm it. Elwes had no coal; he was not going to waste a fire; nothing would induce him to do that. What should he do? A happy thought struck him. He took the dish, covered it with another, and sat down on it patiently like a hatching hen until it got tolerably warm, and the generous port wine flavour was elicited from the gravy.

There was a story current some years ago in Paris, of a Gascon equally fond of good

living, but from much more tangible reasons unable to indulge his taste. On a search for a dinner at some one's expense, our wily Gascon one day entered a restaurant where a pompous gourmand of the parvenu kind was just finishing a solitary but elaborate dinner, and sat surrounded by trophies of the strength of his jaws. The gourmand was just then annoyed at some doubts of the power of his appetite.

"Eh bien, gentlemen," he said, carefully selecting a toothpick. "My waistcoat strings are ready to fly, and yet I could recommence now, if any one would offer me a wager."

The Gascon leaped at him. "I accept the wager, monsieur," he cried, throwing down the carte he had been hungrily scanning. "I'll meet you, though I had formed a project of fasting for a week, for only three days ago I began at a tremendous wedding feast, which has lasted from then till now."

The gourmand, either through politeness or pride, inquired no more, feeling sure of victory in whatever condition his adversary might be. The bet was made. Whoever gave up first was to pay for both dinners. The Gascon ate like a lion. He was a goinfre at the soup, a goulu at the fish, a gourmand at the entremets, a gourmet at the wine, a friand at the dessert. Unfortunately, his stomach, like a dry balloon, could not expand quite quick enough. The Gascon felt there was something going wrong internally, but on he plunged, a hero to the last, and knowing that, victorious or defeated, he could not pay, he ate until he fell in a swoon of repletion.

The waiters felt that here was the beaten man, to whom they had to look for the bill. They surrounded the prostrate champion, partly to find his address, partly to sound his purse, and make sure of their money, but, alas! the Gascon had not enough even to pay Charon for the ferry over the gloomy river. The restaurateur, in his despair, appealed to the witnesses whether the living ought not to pay for the dead. Gourmands are generally good-natured easy people. This epicure, delighted at his victory, though it had ended in the death of his terrible opponent, drew out his purse, and smiling blandly at the prostrate Gascon, quietly paid.

The generous creature had hardly left, before the Gascon, who had remained forgotten in a corner, came to himself, and comprehending from a few words dropped by the nearest waiters that the bill was settled, was so overjoyed that he began to move, which instantly brought every one round him. The universal cry was, "Give him an emetic!" "Bring a stomach pump!"

The poor wretch turned pale, pulled himself together, and, with one bolt, dashed like a harlequin through the glass doors into the street.

"I am all right," he said, when he was safe; "Cadedis, I'll take good care of myself, for I am cured now for a good week more."

That Gascon was evidently a great undeveloped epicure, who only wanted a good income to have sipped his ortolan soup with the best. We can scarcely doubt that in the old Greek times he would have worn his tongue in a little case, like the Sybarite mentioned by Athenæus, who was anxious to preserve the purity and sensitiveness of that useful and favoured organ.

But Captain A., of Chantilly, to judge from the epicurean records of Paris in the year 1805, was not much behind the Gascon in his appreciation of at least the *quantity* of food. Captain A. had been in the cavalry, but he quitted that service, on account of having grown so extremely corpulent that no horse could be found strong enough to bear his ponderous weight. Yet, fat as he grew, he preserved his splendid appetite in its first bloom.

The regiment in which Captain A. had long served, happening to pass Chantilly, the officers resolved to give a dinner to their old comrade. His oldest friend, who knew the captain's appetite best, asserted that though only twelve men were to sit down, dinner must be ordered for four-and-twenty. A pert young lieutenant replied that surely with a good dinner for twelve they could entertain one person more; but the old captain assured them that if Captain A. chose, Captain A. could eat the whole dinner himself. A bet was made of fifty louis by all the mess against the old captain, who instantly started in search of Captain A., to bring him at once to the spot.

He found his man at table. When he heard the cause of the visit, the captain seemed sorry.

"You've chosen a bad time, old friend," he said, with a half sigh, partly of regret, partly of repletion. "I have already taken three basins of purée, and have eaten this boiled leg of mutton, of which you see only the white handle. But, as I have long held you in esteem, I'll try and do something for you. Here, boy, my hat. Dear sir, I am at your service. At what inn are you?"

Arrived at the inn, Captain A. soon hid away the first and second course. The hostess then entered to say that a very fine pike had just arrived.

"Cook it, madam," said Captain A., with the utmost gravity. "Cook it. And since, gentlemen, in your bet it was stipulated there should be no dessert, this pike can take its place."

The officers shrugged their shoulders, and seeing they had hopelessly lost, dispensed with this final proof of the captain's complaisance, secretly vowing, if they passed through Chantilly, never again to make experiments on this intrepid eater.

This reminds us of a story of those rude days of Figg and Broughton, cock-fighting, and bull-baiting, when spendthrift noblemen used to bet on eating matches. The trainer of one of these champion eaters, on one occasion having to write to Lord Sandwich, or whoever the backer was, and report progress, wrote thus:

"The Norfolk Chicken is a leg of pork and a goose-pie ahead; *but we shall pick up when we take to our pickles.*"

An epicure on the sick list is a pitiable sight. Numberless are the stories told of the expedients to which invalid epicures have resorted. The old Scotchman, limited to his glass of claret, took his dose in one of those glass wells that hold a quart. M. Delaboche, a Parisian epicure of eminence of the last century, was less fortunate. A rich financier, with all the mail courriers on his side, he had only to wish for a delicacy, to have it. He ate pâtés de foie gras as if they were cheesecakes, and truffles like cherries. But his wife, dreading widowhood, crossed him in all his tastes, so that he was obliged to shut himself up before he could eat what he liked and when he liked. At last he fell ill, and the first remedy that doctors prescribe to a gourmand is diet. The doctor's rules would have been ill observed, indeed, but for the cruel vigilance of madame, who locked up her husband and kept the keys: a nurse being her under jailer. The remedies were unpleasant but efficacious, and monsieur the financier began to amend. At last he was permitted to eat, and the doctor, knowing his patient's weakness, gave strict directions as to each day, prescribing first of all the white of a fresh egg, and a single slice of bread. The financier only wished that the egg he had to eat had been laid by an ostrich instead of a vulgar barn-door fowl, but he resolved to have his revenge on the bread. He ordered the longest bâton of bread he could find in Paris; it was a yard and a half long, and weighed more than a pound. Madame would have fought over this, but there could be no doubt that the strict letter of the law had been maintained. The egg was served up with pomp, and the cook placed it on the bed of the sick man, whose eyes brightened with returning health as he sat up in bed eager for the fray. But too eagerly sucking the white of the egg, he unfortunately swallowed the yolk also. Miserable accident! unhappy precipitation! the bread was now useless. Madame instantly claimed it as forfeit, and bore it off on her shoulder with triumph, the egg-shell she clutched in her other hand. The financier fell back on his pillow, ill with sheer despair. He was not consoled until his first fit of indigestion. A year or two afterwards he died of an excess of pâtés de foie gras. It was this same artful invalid who, when the doctor had described his next dinner in writing as "une cuisse de poulet," added in a forged hand, "d'Inde," which gave far more solidity to the meal.

One of the most heartless things ever done was a trick once played on Pope, the epicurean actor. A wicked friend asked him to dine off a small turbot and a boiled aitchbone of beef, apologising for the humble fare with the usual feigned humility of friends.

"Why, it's the very thing I like," said Pope, in his reply, referring to the aitchbone. "I will come, my son, with all the pleasure in life."

He came, he saw, he ate; ate till he grew nearer the table, and could eat no more. He had just laid down his knife and fork, like a soldier tired of war's alarms, when a bell was rung, and in came a smoking haunch of venison. Pope saw the trick at once; he cast a look of bitter reproach upon his friend, trifled with a large slice, then again dropped his now utterly useless weapons, and burst into hysterical and unrestrainable tears.

"A friend of twenty years' standing," he sobbed, "and to be deceived in this manner!"

One of the greatest vexations to a true epicure is to see the obtuse blunderings of an ignoramus who does not know what he is eating.

There is a good Yorkshire story admirably told by Mr. Hayward relating to this form of epicurean annoyance. At a grand dinner at Bishopsthorpe (in Archbishop Markham's time) a dish of ruffs and reeves, that had been carefully fattened on boiled wheat, was accidentally placed in front of a silent shy young divine who had come up from some obscure nook of one of the Ridings to be examined for priests' orders, and had been asked to dine by his grace. Blushing, terribly self-conscious, and glad to occupy himself by eating any humble thing that could be got at without asking or drawing attention to his awkward and confused ways, he quietly cleared off three parts of the dish, being quite as hungry as he was nervous, till suddenly a fat rural dean, seeing the extent of the disaster, "called the attention of the company by a loud exclamation of alarm." It was too late—the last ruff had just joined the last reeve, and the young divine's hopes of speedy preferment had vanished with both. There is a rather similar story also told of a Scotch officer dining with the late Lord George Lennox, then commandant at Portsmouth. Lady Louisa Lennox, with charming artfulness, tried to lure off the gallant Scotchman to a more showy but inferior dish.

"Na, na, my leddy," was the stolid reply; "the wee birdies will do vara weel for me."

In the northern version of the story, the scene is laid at Rose Castle (where we believe it really did happen), and the unobservant divine is said to have replied, in the broadest Cumberland:

"No, thank you, my lordship, I'll stick to the lill (little) birds."

With or without conscience, it is astonishing how much some men will spend on a dinner. The ordinary prearranged dinner at the Rocher de Cancale, even when consisting of only ten covers, cost in 1847 about forty francs a head exclusive of wine. At Tailleur's the charge was usually three or four louis a head. It was at one of these dinners that the celebrated Cambacérès laid down his knife and fork, and exclaimed, with grateful enthusiasm:

"M. Tailleur, one could not dine better even at my house!"

A dinner was given to Lord Chesterfield, on his quitting the office of Master of the Buckhounds, at the Clarendon. Thirty persons sat down. It was ordered by Count d'Orsay, an epicure of the highest taste, and the price was six guineas a head. A dinner got up at the Albion, under the auspices of Sir William

Curtis, cost the party between thirty and forty pounds a piece; but then special messengers had been sent to Westphalia to choose hams. Lord Southampton once gave a dinner at the Albion, at ten guineas a head.

Of modern epicures, Cambacérès, Second Consul under the Empire, and afterwards Napoleon's faithful Chancellor, was the most preeminent. This excellent minister was as fond of business as he was of good eating, for, with all his indolence and epicureanism, he worked hard enough to satisfy even Bonaparte. On one occasion (it is said, when the fate of the poor Duke d'Enghien was discussing), Cambacérès was detained very late; as the hour of dinner approached, the minister betrayed unmistakable, and indeed irrepressible, symptoms of impatience, anxiety, and restlessness. At last, unable to control himself, he sat down at an escritoir in the council-room and wrote a note, which he called a gentleman usher to carry. Napoleon smiled, and nodded to an aide-de-camp to intercept the important despatch. When it was brought him, Cambacérès turned red, and begged, like a chidden schoolboy, that his notes on small domestic matters might not be read aloud. Napoleon, however, had a will, and he persisted. It was a billet-doux to the cook, containing only these impressive words:

"Preserve the entremets; the roasts are lost."

When Napoleon was pleased with foreign ambassadors, he used to send them for a treat to "Go and dine with Cambacérès." The emperor was once very angry with the Cour des Comptes for disallowing an item of three hundred francs for trout, charged to Cambacérès by the municipality of Geneva.

It might be that very Duc d'Enghien dinner which Brillat Savarin describes with an exquisite unction. He had been invited to dine at half-past five, and everybody was in time, as Cambacérès liked punctuality, and sometimes even scolded the dilatory.

"I was struck," says Brillat, "on my arrival by the air of consternation that reigned in the assembly; they spoke aside; they looked into the court-yard; some faces announced stupefaction; something extraordinary had certainly come to pass. Monseigneur had been sent for to the council of state, and no one knew when he would return. A mere matter of a quarter of an hour," said Brillat, with an air of indifference, intended to hide the real misgivings of his heart. At the third hour, the discontent rose to mutiny; every one complained.

By the fourth hour all the symptoms were aggravated, in spite of Brillat's suggesting that he whose absence rendered them miserable was, no doubt, far more miserable than they.

At last a pale guest appeared, restless and unhappy. He had ventured down as far as the kitchen, and had returned overcome. His face announced the end of the world; he exclaimed in a voice hardly articulate, and in that muffled tone which expresses at once the fear of making a noise, and the desire of being heard: "Monseigneur went out without giving orders, and however long his absence, dinner will not be served till his return."

All hope was gone; despair struck a livid pallor into every once rosy face.

"Amongst all these martyrs the most wretched was the good D'Aigrefeuille; his body was all over suffering, and the agony of Laocoon was in his face. Pale, distracted, seeing nothing, he sat crouched upon an easy chair, crossed his little hands upon his large belly, and closed his eyes, now to sleep, now to wait the approach of death. Death, however, came not. Towards ten, a carriage was heard rolling into the court-yard. The whole party sprang spontaneously to their legs. Hilarity succeeded to sadness, and in five minutes we were at table. But alas! the hour of appetite was past. All had the air of being surprised at beginning dinner at so late an hour; the jaws had not that isochronous movement which announces regular work, and I know that many guests were seriously inconvenienced by the delay."

Brillat Savarin published his famous book, "The Physiology of Taste," in 1825. It was written on the principles of the Almanac des Gourmands (commenced in 1803), and was the first recognised attempt to treat gastronomy as an intellectual pursuit and a positive profession. Brillat, born at Belley in 1755, was a judge of the Court of Cassation, and a member of most of the French scientific societies. He began life successfully as an advocate, and in 1789 was elected a member of the Constituent Assembly. He joined the moderate party, did his best to avert cruelty and oppression, and was appointed President of the Civil Tribunal for the department of L'Ain. Proscribed during the red terror, Brillat fled to Switzerland, where he consoled himself with science and cooking. He then emigrated to America, where a vast untrodden prairie of gastronomy lay before him. He lived there by teaching French and music. It is said that, having been once out with Jefferson, he shot a wild turkey. Jefferson, on their way home, began relating interesting anecdotes of Washington and the War of Independence. Seeing M. Savarin quite absent and paying no attention, Jefferson stopped, a little nettled, and was about to leave him.

"My dear sir," said the epicure in exile, "I beg ten thousand pardons, but I was just thinking how I should dress my wild turkey."

Brillat returned to France in 1796, filled several employments under the Directory, was reappointed to his old office of judge of the Court of Cassation, and died in 1826. His admirable book ran rapidly through five or six editions, besides the Belgian piracies.

Talleyrand tells that Savarin was once journeying to Lyons; arriving at Sens, he determined to dine there. He sent, according to his invariable custom, for the cook of the hotel, and asked good-humouredly what he could have?

"Little enough, monsieur," said the cook, shrugging his shoulders.

"But let us see, mon ami," said Brillat, diplomatically. "Let us go into the kitchen and talk matters over."

They went; there were four splendid turkeys turning simultaneously at the fire.

"Comment?" said Brillat. "Ah, cochon! You told me you had nothing in the house. Let me have one of those turkeys."

"Impossible!" said the cook, "nom du ciel, impossible! They are all bespoke by a gentleman up-stairs."

"He must have a large party?"

"No; he dines by himself."

"I should like to be acquainted with the man who orders four turkeys for his own eating."

"I'm sure that he will be charmed. Follow me, monsieur."

M. Savarin followed him, and found his own son, sitting in plaintive expectation at the table.

"What, you rogue, four turkeys, and all for yourself? O scélérat! This is not the road to fortune!"

"Yes, sir," replied the unrepentant Absolom, "but you know, that whenever I dine with you, you always eat the whole of 'the fools leave them' (the tit-bit we English call the *oyster*), so I was resolved for once to enjoy myself, and here I am, ready to begin, although I need scarcely say not expecting the honour of your company."

Worthy son of a worthy father! Such are the men who, in their less selfish moments, keep alive the vestal fire of sociability, and contribute to the gaiety of nations. When shall we see the laws of cooking reduced to a code, and the gastronomic library enriched by some Shakspeare of cooks, whose Hamlet shall be a new form of turtle soup, his Macbeth a new entremet, and his Lear a new variety of bisque?

LIGHTNING.

The ancients knew little more about lightning than that it was something to be afraid of. Tiberius encircled his head with a laurel crown. Houseleek, in French joubarbe, the beard of Jove, is still believed to protect the roofs on which it grows from thunderbolts. Augustus wrapped himself in sealskins and retired into his cellar, as people do in towns bombarded by artillery.

Down to a much more recent period, the popular conception of thunder has been persistently gross and material. Sir Thomas Browne, in accordance with the opinion of his day, stood up for the explosive origin of thunder, grounding his belief on Cardan's affirmation that gunpowder fired "doth occupy an hundred times a greater space than its own bulk. And this is the reason not only of this fulminating report of guns, but may resolve the cause of those terrible cracks and affrighting noises of heaven; that is, the nitrous and sulphureous exhalations set on fire in the clouds; whereupon, requiring a larger place, they force out their way, not only with the breaking of the cloud, but the laceration of the air around it."

The same tenets were in vogue with ancient mariners. They held that, in southern parts, both at sea and land, thunder and lightning are more frequent and more violent than northward, because the sun hath greater power. The sun exhales moist particles; these condense and gather into clouds. When these clouds enclose some fiery exhalations, extracted from sulphur and nitre, both out of earth and the ocean, this produces lightning with thunder.

Descartes taught that thunder was caused by a heavy cloud, falling on another cloud beneath it, which cracks under the pressure exactly like a bladder violently sat upon by a clown in a circus, or, to use his equally homely illustration, like a leaf laid in the hollow of your hand and smartly struck with the other hand. Sir Isaac Newton was of opinion that thunder is not occasioned by the fall of clouds, but by the kindling of sulphureous exhalations which are always ascending into the air when the earth is dry.

That lightning is a solid projectile shot forth from the sky, was long an admitted article of faith. Were not the bolts of the thunder found in the ground, just as we find musket-balls after a battle? Who could resist evidence that may be seen and handled? Of these thunder-darts shot out of the middle region, are there not divers in Gresham College? Kentman mentions one of an ash colour, which, being rubbed, smelt like a burnt cow's horn. Moscardo calls them "pierres ceraunies," thunder-stones, from the Greek word signifying lightning. Ceraunia, according to Pliny, is a gem generated by thunder: of which you shall find no mention in Mr. King's Natural History of Precious Stones. The fossils known as belemnites, vulgo "thunderbolts," derive their name from the Greek word for a missile weapon. *If* they be lightning cooled down and crystallised, they are the earliest known form of conical shot. Geologists, unfortunately, have made them out to be the bones of extinct species of cuttlefish. Nay, even the inkbag peculiar to those cephalopods has been found connected with the "bolt," so well preserved that drawings have been made with this pristine sepia.

Everybody is now aware that lightning is only an intense or concentrated manifestation of electricity. What the *thing* electricity is, we are far from knowing. Dr. Tyndall ventures to say no more than that we have every reason to conclude that heat and electricity are both modes of motion. We know, experimentally, that from electricity we can obtain heat, and that from heat (as in the case of the thermo-electric pile) we can obtain electricity. But although we have, or think we have, tolerably clear ideas of the character of the motion of heat, our ideas are very crude as to the precise nature of the change which this motion must undergo in order to appear as electricity—in fact, we know, as yet, nothing about it.

The *name* electricity is derived from the Greek electron, amber. Long before the Christian era, it had been observed that amber, after being rubbed, attracts and holds light objects that are presented to it. Sealingwax, sulphur, and glass, possess the same power when submitted to friction by woollen stuffs. Without the friction no attraction occurs. Amber, therefore, acquires new properties by friction. We can afford to confess our ignorance of the cause. Meanwhile, in ordinary talk and writing, we employ the terms "electricity" and "electric fluid" to denote a certain class of phenomena and their causes.

Men's knowledge of this subject made no further advance until Otto de Guericke made the first electrical machine. It consisted of a globe of sulphur, turned on an axis by means of a handle, with one hand, while a piece of woollen cloth was held against it with the other hand. Our countryman Hawksby substituted for the ball of sulphur, a cylinder of glass revolving in contact with a cushion. Afterwards, circular plates of glass were used. By these means, stronger electrical effects, resulting in sparks, were obtained.

Then followed the discovery that certain bodies possess the power of conducting electricity; which gave us conductors and non-conductors. A corollary to this, was the condensation of electricity, now familiar to us by means of the Leyden jar—an open-mouthed glass vessel partially covered inside and out with tin foil. This apparatus, which first made known the electric shock, was discovered by chance at Leyden, in 1746. A philosopher calling himself Cuneus, happened to want to electrify some water contained in a bottle which he held in his hand. For that purpose, he plunged into it a metal rod communicating with his electric machine. On attempting to remove the rod with his other hand, he experienced a violent commotion. His friend Muschenbræck would try it too. He also felt the same effect, and was so terribly frightened that he wrote to Reaumer that for the crown of France he would not suffer the like again. Allaman, who had the courage to repeat the experiment, declared that it took away his breath; it gave Professor Winckler a convulsion fit; other curious inquirers were similarly punished.

Our amusement at their terrors may be restrained by remembering the awe the unknown inspires, and also that even now it is by no means safe to play with intensified electricity. Familiarity made that an amusement which at first had given such alarm. Everybody took to giving and receiving electric shocks. The Abbé Nollet administered them to three hundred men of Louis the Fifteenth's guard, who, hand in hand, felt simultaneously the new sensation. The Leyden jar may be made of such a size as to produce an impression which is far from agreeable. Combined in numbers, it makes a battery.

When we are dazzled by the lightning's flash and are stunned and shaken by the rolling thunder; when we see trees splintered, buildings rent and set on fire, men and animals frightfully calcined or mysteriously left dead; we might hesitate to confound these grand meteoric outbursts with the puny results of our poor little machines. Nevertheless, Otto de Guericke, when he discovered the electric spark, and after him Wall, did not hesitate to regard them as identical. They had the joy of discovering, not in theory but in actual fact, the real cause of the most magnificent of earthly phenomena. Not one of their successors, from Muschenbræck to Nollet, failed to maintain the same opinions. But science requires proof, as well as belief. Franklin's, therefore, will be the great name which posterity will connect with this inquiry.

On the 22nd of June, 1752, Franklin walked out of Philadelphia city, accompanied by his son, a little boy, who carried a large kite on his back. This step was taken as a blind to the gossips. Franklin, the most prudent of men, did not want to incur the ridicule attending a broken-down project. He risked quite enough in public opinion, in allowing his boy to fly a kite while a thunderstorm was threatening an almost certain wetting. When fairly out of the town, the kite was flown. The string, soaked by the rain, became a conductor. From its lower extremity he obtained sundry sparks. He drew off lightning from the clouds, as we draw electricity from frictioned glass. Lightning and electricity were one! He might have dared to bring home the kite himself, after this discovery, though history does not tell us whether he did.

Few discoveries have caused such world-wide excitement. In June, 1753, Romas repeated the kite experiment at Nérac, in France, and confirmed the facts announced by the American philosopher. His kite string, nearly three hundred yards long, was copper wire fastened to a short length of silken braid. At the junction of the wire and the silk, a tin tube was suspended, to conduct the electricity to the ground. A tempest came on. Romas drew with his finger from this conductor, at first a few feeble sparks, and then a strong one which nearly knocked him down. After that, he made use only of a metal "excitator" with a non-conducting handle, and so obtained veritable tongues of fire. Three long straws which happened to be lying beneath the tin tube, began a mystic dance, to the great amusement of the spectators. As long as the experiment lasted, the clouds ceased to dart forth lightning. Romas had robbed them of their electricity.

Everybody would do the same. The electricity of the atmosphere became the fashionable study. It cost a Russian philosopher, Rickmann, his life. In his laboratory in St. Petersburg, he fixed an iron rod which rose above the roof and was isolated below, by resting on a glass tube. On the 6th of August, 1753, he set about studying the electricity of a storm by means of this dangerous apparatus. He approached the iron bar too closely. His assistant saw a spark

leap from it, and, hitting his forehead, strike him dead. This sad event made philosophers chary of experiments with electricity derived directly from the clouds. Had they continued, other victims, there is little doubt, would have been sacrificed. Besides, the grand problem was already solved. Lightning having been drawn down to earth, in the shape of electric sparks, its nature was no longer a mystery.

That lightning should kill is not surprising, but sometimes it works homœopathic cures. In 1762, it entered the chamber of one Dr. Winter, residing in Kent, who had been paralysed for more than a year, after a fit of apoplexy. He received a violent shock, which completely cured him. At Niort (Deux Sèvres), in 1819, a patient who had suffered for years from rheumatism in the left arm, was knocked down, and cured, by a flash of lightning.

We may consider it proved that every thunder cloud develops in the ground beneath it, an electricity the opposite to its own. This result will occur with considerable energy in soils that are good conductors, such as marshy grounds or metalliferous districts. The effect will be greatest on the most elevated points, such as the tops of steeples, trees, or masts. In such cases there is danger. If the cloud discharge its electricity, its action ceases, and terrestrial objects, suddenly reverting to their former electrical condition, experience what is called "the return shock." Flocks of sheep, teams of horses, groups of people congregated together, have been stunned and even killed by it, with no visible wound on the upper part of their bodies, though often on the soles of their feet. This summer, several soldiers have been struck by the return shock, with no more serious injury than the loss of the nails in the soles of their shoes.

One of the most curious thunder feats is recorded by Bridone. One Mrs. Douglas was looking out of window during a tempest. The lightning struck the iron wire by which the rim of her hat was kept in shape, and melted it. The hat was ruined, but the lady got off scot free. Another time, when a storm was coming on, a young lady stretched her arm out of a window in order to close it. There was a lightning flash, and the bracelet she wore disappeared so completely that not a trace of it could be found. These facts show with what precision lightning picks out metallic bodies and avoids insulating materials.

On the 17th of last July, a whole family, named Collart, living near Avesnes, were struck during a violent tempest. The lightning ran down the chimney, entered the living room where they were all assembled, and escaped by making a hole over the door. The father received on his right leg a shock which prevented his going to work for three weeks; the mother had her right wrist bruised; the eldest daughter, aged sixteen, was struck on the forehead; the second daughter, aged nine, was hit on one knee; and what is most strange, her tongue was burnt, causing intense pain for a quarter of an hour only. Most wonderful of all, none of these injuries were dangerous.

Completely puzzling are the doings of lightning in what may be called its spheroïdal state. Globular lightning, balls of fire, have been known for ages. M. Babinet relates that a tailor lodging near the Val-de-Grâce, in Paris, was sitting at table, when, after a loud thunder clap, the paper screen which closed the fireplace fell as if beaten in by a gust of wind, and a ball of fire as big as a child's head emerged gently from the chimney and slowly moved about the room at a little distance above the floor. Its aspect resembled a kitten rolled into a ball; it was luminous, but appeared cold. When it approached the tailor's legs, he avoided its contact by opening them wide. After several excursions in the middle of the chamber, it rose to the level of his head. To avoid it, he threw himself back on his chair. Suddenly, it lengthened itself a little, and directed its course towards a hole in the chimney that had been made to admit the tube of a stove, but was closed by paper pasted over it. The fireball tore the paper and went out again up the chimney. When it was supposed to have reached the chimney pot, a loud explosion was heard which demolished a part of the top of the chimney. Similar instances might be cited in plenty.

IN THE CLUB SMOKING ROOM.

I. THE UNAPPRECIATED POET.

THE critic's curse
Is on my verse;
What matters? Creatures such as he
Beslime the rose
That sweetest blows,
Or spit their venom in the sea;
Yet have no power
To blight the flower,
Vex the great deep, or injure me!

Write, would-be poet! write for girls!
And take the boarding school by storm;
Shed epithets on eyes, and curls,
Teeth, lips, and graces of the form,
And small reviews shall flaunt your name,
And give you half a fortnight's fame!

But thou, true poet, write for men!
And though the fools would jeer thee down,
They're harmless both with tongue and pen,
And neither make nor mar renown.
And men thy music shall prolong
And love thy memory and thy song.

I know that in a hundred years
This verse of mine,
That few men heed, because I live,
Will glow and shine,
Bright in the darkness of the past,
Because I'm dead,
And stop by competition keen
No rival's bread.
Let it, or let it not! To me
Myself is my Futurity!

II. THE SUPERFLUOUS VETERAN.

The dreadful, dreadful minutes!
 Silent and sure and slow;
They master and quench and overwhelm
 Alike our joy and woe.
They conquer beauty, youth, and strength,
 And grind in their cruel mill
Glory and Fame and Power and Wealth,
 The good as well as the ill.

The dreadful, dreadful minutes!
 They drip and drift and pass,
And shear the generations
 As a mower shears the grass.
Till nought remains of Cæsar
 Except a floating breath,
A lie on the page of History,
 A drop in the sea of Death!

III. THE SMOKER.

Sometimes the big world vexes me,
Sometimes dull care perplexes me;
 Sometimes on the sea of life
Such storms around me cluster,
And roar and rave and bluster,
 I seem to sink in the strife.
No matter! There's always truce
 In the heat of the wildest war;
At least I dream or think so,
 As I smoke my first cigar.

Sometimes when nothing ails me
Except that the money fails me,
 I envy the rich in their pride;
Though their only obvious merit
Is the gold that they inherit
 And couldn't earn if they tried;
But quietly after dinner
 I banish such thoughts afar,
What do I care for Fortune
 As I smoke my second cigar?

Sometimes, in the heartless city,
I think it a shame and pity
 That cash and virtue are one;
That to swindle for shillings seems awful,
While to plunder for millions is lawful,
 If only successfully done.
But why should I mend its morals,
 Or call the world to my bar?
I've dined, and I wish to be quiet—
 I'll smoke my third cigar!

IV. THE STRANGER, WHO HAS DINED, AND HATES TOBACCO.

Upon his mouth may curses fall,
 May it be dead to savour,
May all his fruits turn cinders dry,
 And all his wines lose flavour;
May bread be sawdust in his jaws,
 His teeth grow loose and black, O!
And all his sweets turn bitter sour—
 The wretch who chews tobacco!

Upon his nose may curses light,
 May odours never charm it;
May garden flowers and woods and bowers
 Yield noxious scents to harm it;
May all Arabia's spice exhale
 Foul gas to make him suffer,
Who makes a dusthole of his nose—
 The vile tobacco-snuffer.

May never lady press his lips,
 His proffered love returning,
Who makes a furnace of his mouth,
 And keeps its chimney burning!
May each true woman shun his sight,
 For fear his fumes might choke her,
And none but hags, who smoke themselves,
 Have kisses for a smoker!

A CRAZY COLONY.

ONCE upon a time, a very ancient time, there reigned in Ireland a pagan king. Hideously wicked himself, he had a daughter who was as beautiful as the day, and as good as she was beautiful. The queen mother, who had been converted to Christianity by a good priest named Gerrebert, had taught the Princess Dymphna to love all that was pure and noble. Added to a naturally sweet disposition, her mother's training rendered the maiden a very saint. Feeling her end approaching, the queen confided the youthful princess to the care of pious Gerrebert, knowing how unfit for such a charge was her unhappy spouse. The king, now that the check of his wife's presence was removed, gave free vent to his evil passions; and even his daughter was not safe from his iniquity.

Driven to desperation, the Princess Dymphna, as the only means of guarding her honour and her life, braved all the unknown dangers of sea and land, and, accompanied by the faithful priest, took refuge from her father's wrath in the deserts of Kempenland. Here she hoped to live and die, remembered by God, but forgotten by man. But not even in the remote solitudes of Belgium was she to find an asylum from her revengeful parent. The king tracked the fugitives, pursued and discovered them, and ordered Gerrebert to be put to death. This order his servants executed, but, staggered by their monarch's unnatural ferocity, they hesitated to obey his further commands that the princess should share the same fate. Exasperated and pitiless, the king with his own hand murdered the unfortunate maiden. But of such saints the memory survives, and the spot in which the pious princess had lived became hallowed and blessed for evermore to numbers of her afflicted fellow-creatures. To the rude chapel where her pure devotions had been performed flocked multitudes who had heard of the barbarous assassination of Gerrebert and Dymphna. Among others, several poor lunatics came, who, cured of their malady at the desert shrine, returned to their homes in full possession of their faculties. Saint Dymphna, to whom these miraculous cures were attributed, became the beloved patron saint of lunatics. Pilgrimages to her shrine became common, and more or less success attended the prayers of those who brought their afflicted relatives to the lonely chapel in the wilds of Kempenland. Many would leave the sufferers under the kind care of the inhabitants of the little hamlet which had now grown up round the chapel; so that in time the village

assumed the character of a refuge for the crazy devotees of St. Dymphna. They, unmolested, either worked out their cure, or, soothed by the kindness they met with and by the tranquillity which pervaded this lonely spot, passed their monotonous days in unwonted peace.

So runs an old legend; but the place to which it refers still exists, and still is a refuge for insane persons. Its modern name is Gheel. Its position is in a corner of Belgium. It was visited within two years by Dr. Edward Neuschler, who passed nine days at this fantastic colony in September, 1866,* and who observed it at his leisure, sometimes alone, sometimes accompanied by the medical superintendent, Dr. Bulkens.

The métier of the village of Gheel is and has been from time immemorial the entertainment of the insane. Each householder who by good conduct and tact has earned a medical certificate is qualified to receive one, or occasionally two such lodgers. The rate of payment now is from sixty-five to eighty-five centimes daily. But you will say, the lodger's board alone must cost a host as much. Has the memory of St. Dymphna so practical an influence, or is philanthropy so rife at Gheel that this semi-Flemish, semi-Walloon people, themselves poor cultivators of the soil, should thus devote themselves to the weal of their suffering fellow-creatures from out all lands? No, and at this point we must observe how the miracle changes its character; for does it not remain a miracle that such hosts should find it answer to entertain such lodgers?

The origin of Gheel certainly rests on the local basis of religious devotion to St. Dymphna, and on this account the inhabitants have for more than a thousand years been accustomed to that daily intercourse with the insane which has developed tact in their treatment, at the same time that vulgar prejudices have been shaken off. But to this, as to most practical questions, the test of gain must be applied on the one side, if of happiness on the other. To me it does not appear the least part of the wonder, that experience should show, as I believe it to do, that these afflicted members of society (whom we have been accustomed to consider in every sense burdensome, even to those to whom they are closely knit by ties of love), should not only find among strangers a happy home of comparative freedom, but that they should so contribute by their personal exertions to the income of their hosts, that for the trifling addition of sevenpence per day, they should be eagerly sought after as lodgers. A little attention, however, will, I think, enable us to understand how, and to what extent, the system answers at Gheel, and why it would not, save perhaps in a very modified form, answer if introduced in England.

Those who are at all conversant with peasant life on the Continent, understand what Arthur Young calls the magic of property; the alchemy which converts even rock and sand into gold. The small proprietor who can make the work of his little children profitable, knows how to utilise the spasmodic efforts of the deficient and crazy. The latter, if he sometimes finds labour irksome, is on the whole a great gainer by sharing the interests and sympathies of the sane with whom he is hourly associated, and by feeling that he is a useful member of society. I believe that added to the inestimable influence of old tradition, the prevalence of peasant proprietorship and the cheapness of land, are among the great secrets of the success of the Gheel system. That it is a success, for, at all events, a large proportion of lunatic cases will, I think, be proved by Dr. Neuschler's account of what he saw.

On the day of his arrival at Gheel, he attended an al fresco musical entertainment, and mixed freely with the audience, a large number of whom were insane: a fact which he says would have been hard to discover unaided. In the doctor's subsequent walks in and along Gheel, he saw whole families busy working in the fields. It happened to be the season of the potato harvest, and sane and insane were occupied in collecting and storing the crop, with apparently equal interest. Sometimes side by side with the nourriciers or care-keepers, sometimes alone, or only accompanied by a child, the crazy colonists were labouring heartily. Instead of working *under*, they appeared to be working *with* their hosts: a system which must tend to lighten their labour.

Locke's recommendation for children of "a little wholesome neglect," applies to these *innocents*, the graceful French name for the insane. In the houses, the sight that meets the eye is scarcely less gratifying. Here in the common room are found seated at the fire in company with the old people, women, and small children, the insane who are unfit for field labour—not however idle—for animated by the society of busy companions, most of the patients find congenial employment. Some help in the house, amuse the children, or take care of the pig, the invariable member of a nourricier's household. Others follow the handicraft learnt in earlier and happier days. But when possible, outdoor labour is so universally pronounced the best and healthiest for mind and body that it is chiefly in the towns that the crazy artisans are seen plying their trades. Tailors, shoemakers, carpenters, blacksmiths, and saddlers, convert the lodgers' chambers into ateliers, while the women employ themselves according to their tastes and capabilities in netting, knitting, sewing, and lace-making. I say employ *themselves* advisedly, for Monsieur Jules Duval, the champion of Gheel, is amply borne out in his assertion,* that not only does the *no restraining* system tend to the happiness of the patients themselves, but that when the host, instead of being regarded as a policeman or taskmaster, is

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* See the Journal of Mental Science for April, 1867.

* Gheel, ou une Colonie d'Aliénés, par Jules Duval.

considered by his lodger as a kindly companion to be looked up to for imitation (an instinct which the deficient share with children), industry, voluntary and hearty, follows, as it is likely to do.

Each well-behaved lodger is allowed by his host the trifling sum of half a franc a week to spend on such little luxuries as beer and tobacco. Many work at some trade in spare hours on their own account.

But liberty and labour are not considered sufficient for these poor colonists. Their tastes are encouraged and cultivated. M. Duval tells us of a choral society founded by a mad violinist, nicknamed the Grand Colbert. His portrait adorns the room in which the society meets to practise, previous to taking part in patriotic or religious fêtes. The church dedicated to Saint Dymphna, which in the twelfth century succeeded to the rude chapel in which the seventh century saint worshipped, is ever open to her poor devotees. They attend regular services there, besides wandering in at will, when wishing for solitude and quiet.

Singing lessons are provided for the patients at Gheel. Any special gift or taste developes itself in this kindly atmosphere, where instead of living a life of isolation, these poor creatures bask in the sunshine of sympathy.

If a Gheel child be frightened, to whom does it run for protection but to the poor lunatic lodger, who will tenderly and proudly shelter the little one whom he instinctively feels to be even inferior to himself. As the child gets older he insensibly contracts the tact he recognises in the dealings of his elders with the lunatic; and one of the most singular features of the place is the absence of that inhuman and yet almost universal tendency on the part of the uneducated sane to tease the insane. Of course this is chiefly due to the fact that such patients are the rule, not, as elsewhere, the exception. But it would be unjust to the Gheelites not to allow with Dr. Neuschler, that, if not the pure philanthropists some enthusiasts would represent them to be, they do generally appear to be guided by most commendable feelings of kindness towards their commensals, to whom, moreover, they attach themselves greatly in many instances. Often inferior to their lodgers in position and culture, the nourriciers frequently retain the feelings of respect which superiority commands, and malgré vagaries and eccentricities, notre petit monsieur and notre petite dame are treated with the deference implied by those titles. An anecdote given by Monsieur Michel Chevalier, shows what an affectionate confidence the parents place in their lodgers. A woman holding her baby was alone in the room with her commensal when he was attacked by a fit of maniacal fury. Feeling that she and the child were at his mercy, she calculated on the lunatic's affection for the infant, and, placing it in his arms, retired. The rush of feeling induced in the maniac by this courageous manœuvre, subdued the paroxysm; overwhelmed by the sense of responsibility and by his affection for his pet, the lunatic caressed and fondled the child till the mother returned in a few minutes to find all calm and peaceful. The same instinct doubtless leads the colonists to attach themselves to the animals entrusted to their care, whom they are never found to ill treat, but whom, on the contrary, they tend with the greatest kindness. Their hosts have the good sense to see how much it is to their own interest, to cultivate these amiable propensities of the lunatic shepherds. One lodger displayed a wonderful talent for catching and taming birds. He would watch his captives by the hour, till they learnt to recognise in him an affectionate guardian, and would hop about his room and feed from his hand without fear. Later they were allowed to fly in the house, and sun themselves at the door, while their master mounted guard, that the cat should not endanger his pets. Teaching his birds to sing, solaced many a dull hour, and soothed the disturbed spirit of the demented bird-trainer.

Dr. Neuschler found one well educated patient busily occupied as secretary to a committee, that had been formed to enlist the interest of the inhabitants of Gheel in an agricultural exhibition at Turnhout. He fulfilled his duties, which involved a good deal of walking and talking, in a most satisfactory manner, and received thanks from all quarters.

Dr. Bulkens mentions a case of an unfortunate lad who had been driven out of his originally timid mind by his father's severity. Henri so revived, and his obscured intellect so developed in his happy home at Gheel, that he constituted himself a very efficient steward and gardener in his host's establishment. The unnatural parent's reappearance and conduct, however, terrified and depressed the poor boy in such a manner that the nourricier took upon himself to warn the father to leave his son in his more paternal care, and he thenceforth adopted the youth as an enfant chéri of the house. Henri is now a non-commissioned officer in the Belgian army. He spends his furlough annually at his Gheel home, where his arrival is hailed by all the family as a veritable fête.

The entente cordiale which commonly exists between a family and the inmate, occasionally reverses the order of things strangely. Take the case of a poor German weaver, who lost his reason in consequence of anxiety on the score of poverty. He was boarded with an artisan at Gheel, who devoted himself to calming and restoring the troubled mind of his guest. Before this work was accomplished, however, the artisan died, leaving his widow and four children almost destitute. The German weaver observed with feelings of the deepest sympathy the sorrow of those by whom he was surrounded. He seemed at once to realise the position of affairs. Calmly and seriously he accepted the responsibility which he considered was imposed on him by gratitude. He employed his returning health of body and mind in working for the

family of his kind host. He has constituted himself sole bread-winner for the widow and orphans. He gives a good education to the latter, and a more touching sight can scarcely be imagined than the picturesque old German, now sixty-eight years old, accompanying to church on Sundays, the adopted children who regard him as a father.

There is an infirmary close to the village, but the simplicity of its arrangements betokens the limited use made of it. It is, in fact, merely a hospital for invalid or exceptional lunatics—no abiding place for the insane, whose real homes are in the houses of the Gheelites. In the building, however, are the quarters of the medical inspector of the colony, the manager, and other authorities. Clothes for the insane are also stored here, and the baths are open to out-patients as well as in-patients.

The colony of Gheel is conducted in a liberal spirit. No applicant for admission is refused on account of his religion or position. Additional pay ensures additional luxuries. At one time an English boarder spent considerable sums in different amusements, such as sporting, fêtes, and pleasure parties.

Very lately, a high testimony was paid to Dr. Bulkens's skill and system. He was summoned to the palace of Miramar that he might undertake the care of the unfortunate Empress Charlotte, whose misfortunes all have deeply deplored. It is gratifying to know that, added to Dr. Bulkens's personal devotion to the suffering princess, the domestic treatment of Gheel has already had the happiest results in restoring the equilibrium of her mind.

But it is obvious that rich patients are always likely to be in the minority at Gheel. Everywhere money *can* purchase luxury; whether it *does* so for all wealthy lunatics is another question; and we suspect that those who remember with interest the recent trial about Mr. Tovey Tennant's case, would wish for him greater poverty and a refuge like Gheel. "Give me neither poverty nor riches," was the prayer of the wise man—still more appropriate a supplication for these unwise *innocents*, whose best riches are freedom and God's pure air.

Some may remember the pitiable case, which was published about five years ago, of the Falmouth idiot screeching in his garret prison for twenty years, for his "Charlotte."

The Times of June 5, 1868, quotes a no less pitiable story of a clergyman's son, in Philadelphia, whom death, more merciful than his fellow-men, set free, after sixty long years of insanity spent in a cage.

Who knows how many more victims to ignorance, cruelty, and avarice, may yet be pining in confinement—prisoners to whom Gheel would afford a safe and blessed refuge! Others, too, there are, who, better loved and tended, might in such a colony lead a happier life than in circumstances of even greater luxury.

But is there no dark side to this glowing picture? There is no darker side than this: that Dr. Sibbald holds some judicious reforms to be necessary at Gheel, foremost among which is the exclusion of cases wholly unsuitable for the family treatment—the only treatment possible or desirable in such a colony. These are, according to Dr. Sibbald, cases of lunatics who generally—or even frequently—require restraint. They would be better under the immediate supervision of medical authorities. But this class must not be understood to include all violent patients; for, singular as it may appear, these are the lodgers most sought after by nourriciers, because the same energy of physique and morale which renders them obstreperous, also renders them, when judiciously and fearlessly trained, fervent and hearty in service.

Another class of patients which ought to be excluded from Gheel, is composed of maniacs who desire to escape. The continued existence of this desire is sufficient proof that they are discontented with their lot; and as the nourriciers have to pay the expenses of all escapes, such patients must be either fettered, or watched with a jealousy more irksome to bear than confinement in an ordinary asylum. Dr. Sibbald would further exclude all paralytic patients and confirmed or frequent invalids.

Are patients more frequently cured at Gheel than elsewhere, and do they enjoy greater bodily health?

From a table given by Dr. Campbell in 1865 we learn the statistics of the recoveries and deaths in the county asylums throughout England for the preceding five years. From his data, it appears that the average proportion of annual recoveries to admissions was thirty-six per cent.

Now, in reckoning from Gheel statistics, two counterbalancing facts must be borne in mind. A large number of incurable cases are sent to Gheel from other asylums. For calculating purposes, these must be deducted from the number of admissions. But then, again, what at Gheel are counted as cures, include not only guérisons, but also améliorations notables. Taking this last fact into consideration, we find that not thirty-two per cent. can be reckoned as cured at Gheel. The average mortality may be said to be nearly on an equality with that in ordinary asylums.

Perhaps, therefore, the conclusion to be drawn is, that though calculated to cure many a type of insanity, the Gheel system is more especially desirable as affording the means for a happy and useful life to numbers who must, under almost any other circumstances, drag out their weary length of days in listless inaction, fretful petulance, or dangerous ferocity. But the mere existence of such a colony, the fact that such a system is, and has for ages been, possible, is immensely valuable, both in its direct effects and in the encouraging lesson of patience, consideration, and hope, that it teaches to those who are of sound mind. Many become insane, but not for all such is the whole range of their lives necessarily and hopelessly poisoned. If the shelter here described, be not

available for all cases and in all countries, let us at least rejoice that there is, on any one spot of earth, such a harbour of refuge for some poor rudderless ships, that without it must have been total wrecks.

AMONG OUR GREAT GRANDFATHERS.

Don Manuel Alvarez Espriella crossed over from Spain, in the year 1802, in the same packet boat or little barge wherein our countryman Chaucer once travelled to and from an island of fair women walled with glass.

> Which barge was as a man's thought,
> After his pleasure to him brought.

Builder and steersman of the barge that brought over Don Manuel for a holiday with our great-grandfathers, was Robert Southey. Southey, in the first strength of his manhood, was at work upon Kirke White's Remains, Memorials of the Cid, Palmerin of England, a History of Portugal, Specimens of English Poetry, was printing his Madoc, writing his Kehama, while chuckling to himself and his friends over his Don Manuel Espriella, through whom he was giving his countrymen what he could of the giftie to see themselves as others see them. His mythical Don was a Spanish Catholic gentleman, who landed at Falmouth in April, 1802, and during a tour in England wrote to his family and to his father confessor letters describing his impressions of this country and its people. Southey was not tolerant of Catholics. "I am for abolishing the test," he said, "with regard to every other sect, Jews and all, but not to Catholics. They will not tolerate." So when his pleasant Don described the usages of the benighted Protestants, although his character was well enough preserved to mystify many a reader, Southey took good care to make his satire cut both ways. So many people really were mystified by the three volumes gravely entitled "Letters from England: by Don Manuel Alvarez Espriella. Translated from the Spanish," that to this day some vague belief that the book is only a translation, keeps it out of its rights as one of the pleasantest and most individual of Southey's excellent prose writings. "The book will be very amusing," he wrote to his brother at sea, Lieutenant Tom, "and promises more profit than any of my former works." And then, with an eye to material, "I want you grievously to tell Espriella stories about the navy, and give him a good idea of its present state. Some of your own stories you will recognise." After his three volumes were out, the work of his choice would have been to go on with more in the same vein: "What I feel most desirous to do, is to send Espriella again on his travels, and so complete my design. But this must not be unless he hits the fancy of the public." But Espriella's letters were ten years getting into a third edition, which was less success than had been looked for. The humour, serving a good social purpose, was too dry and quiet; the suggestion of a real Don, helped with ingeniously mystifying notes which professed to come from his translator, was too true to life; and so the book passed only with the quick-witted for what it was—a shrewd picture of the social state of England, painted with wholesome purpose by a lively Englishman from an outsider's point of view. The book has improved by keeping; for it now takes us upon a holiday tour through the England of our great-grandfathers, and enables us to measure progress by comparison of England as it is, with England as it was in the beginning of the present century.

After some troublesome custom house experience, and a warning to Don Manuel from his English friend not to judge England by her seaports, for "the people at these places are all either birds of passage or birds of prey," the Don found a Falmouth inn magnificent, although his friends complained that it was dirty and uncomfortable. But he could not relish the food of the islanders: they ate their meat, he said, half raw; the vegetables were never boiled enough to be soft, and everything was insipid except the bread, which was salt, bitter, and disagreeable. Wine at inns he found, as he would still find it, in general, miserably bad; the customers knew this, and yet drank, that the host might be satisfied with their expenses. So far our ways are little changed by the course of the century, but the blessings of the old posting system are recalled, as Don Manuel goes on to report, that the perpetual stir and bustle in this inn was as surprising as it was wearisome. Doors opening and shutting, bells ringing, voices calling to the waiter from every quarter, while he cried "Coming" to one room, and hurried away to another. Everybody was in a hurry; either they were going off in the packets, and were hastening their preparations to embark, or they had just arrived and were impatient to be on the road homeward. Every now and then, a carriage rattled up to the door with a rapidity which made the very house shake. The man who cleaned the boots was running in one direction; the barber with his powder-bag in another; here, went the barber's boy with his hot water and razor; there came the clean linen from the washerwoman, and the hall was full of porters and sailors bringing in luggage or bearing it away. Now, they heard a horn blow, because the post was coming in; and in the middle of night they were awakened by another, because it was going out. Nothing was done without a noise, and yet noise was the only thing forgotten in the bill. It gratified the Don to be drawn by two horses at the rate of a league and a half in the hour. In two hours he reached Truro, where his breakfast was spoilt by the abominable bitterness of the bread. The town, clean and opulent; its main street broad, with superb shops, and a little gutter stream running through it. Through chilly weather, and over a track as dreary as any in Estremadura, he reached Mitchel-Dean, which was what they called a rotten borough—that is, it had the

privilege of returning two members to parliament, who purchased the votes of their constituents, and the place had no other trade. On went the tourist, with this one more difficulty in his way of travelling, that at every stage the chaise was changed, and, of course, there was the inconvenience of removing all the baggage.

The country was still dreary and desolate, most of its inhabitants living down the mines. "I never see the greater part of my parishioners," said a clergyman here, "till they come up to be buried."

They met one of the old stage waggons which achieved in their own fashion what is now the goods traffic upon our railway lines. The Don describes it as a huge carriage upon four wheels of prodigious breadth—a breadth regulated by law, on account of the roads—very wide, very long, arched over with cloth, like a bower, and drawn by eight large horses, whose neck-bells were heard afar off, as they approached. These machines, day and night upon their way, were called flying waggons, although slower than even a travelling funeral. England, again, was no paradise for the post-horses, who represented the express trains of their day. Waiting for a change at Honiton, says Southey, in his character of Espriella, at length a chaise arrived, and the horses, instead of being suffered to rest, weary as they were (for they had just returned from Exeter), were immediately put to for another journey. One of them had been rubbed raw by the harness. At every stroke of the whip Don Manuel's conscience upbraided him, and the driver was not sparing of it. The life of a post-horse, he adds, is truly wretched. There will be cruel individuals in all countries; but cruelty here is a matter of calculation. The postmasters find it more profitable to overwork their beasts, and kill them by hard labour in two or three years, than to let them do half the work, and live out their natural length of life. The old stage-coach—not the lighter mail coach, which, in time, supplied the stages with improvement of their pattern—was, at the beginning of this century, shaped like a trunk with a rounded lid placed topsy turvy. The passengers sat sideways; it carried sixteen inside, and as many on the roof as could find room. Yet, says Espriella Southey, this unmerciful weight, with the proportionate luggage of each person, is dragged by four horses, at the rate of a league and a half within the hour; and he admired the skill with which the driver guided them with long reins, and directed those huge machines round the corners of the streets, which they always turned at full speed, and through the sharp turns of the inn gateways. Accidents, nevertheless, often happened, and Southey makes his Spaniard urge against the speed of the stage-coach, besides its cruelty, the objection, since urged against railway travelling, that, "considering how little time this rapidity allows for observing the country, I prefer the slow and safe movements of the calessa."

The road through Doncaster suggested memories of Gilbert Wakefield, a famous scholar, who had lately been imprisoned there for opposition to the Government, but had been released a year before Espriella's visit, and had died of fever six months after his release. The Bishop of Llandaff in supporting the proposal of the Government for a ten per cent income tax, had said that it was not enough. The Government should take a tenth of every man's property. If every person were affected in the same proportion, all would remain relatively as before, and, in fact, no person be affected at all. "For if," argued the bishop, "the foundation of a great building were to sink equally in every part at the same time, the whole pile, instead of suffering any injury, would become firmer." "True," said Wakefield, in his reply, "and you, my lord bishop, who dwell in the upper apartments, might still enjoy the prospect from your windows; but what would become of me and the good people who live upon the ground floor?" One of the most learned and upright scholars of the day was sentenced to two years' imprisonment—a sentence which proved sentence of death—because in the course of this reply to the bishop he had found a parallel for the state of the country in the fable of the Ass and his Panniers. So much for freedom of discussion when this nineteenth century began!

Housed with his friend in London, Espriella found that it wanted time and habit to acquire the art of sleeping. To begin with, he was roused every half hour to hear a report on the state of the weather. For the first three hours the watchman told him that it was a moonlight night, then it became cloudy, and at half-past three o'clock was rainy, so that he was as well acquainted with every variation of the atmosphere as if he had been looking from the window all night long. A strange custom, he thought it of the Londoners, to pay men for bawling to them what the weather was, every hour during the night, till they got so accustomed to the noise, that they slept on and could not hear what was said! The clatter of the night coaches had scarcely ceased before that of the morning carts began. The dustman with his bell, and his chaunt of Dust oh! succeeded to the watchman, then the boy who collected porter pots, then Milk below! and so on, with an innumerable succession of cries, each in a different tune; but all in the way of trade, and the Don utters no hint of a barrel organ. A walk in the streets by day showed differences between 1802 and 1868 rather in the detail than in the character of the street scenery. Two rival blacking makers were standing in one of the streets, each carried a boot, completely varnished with blacking, hanging from a pole, and on the other arm a basket with the blacking-balls for sale. On the top of their poles was a sort of standard, with a printed paper explaining the virtue of the wares; the one said that his blacking was the best blacking in the world; the other, that his was so good you might eat it. A quack, by his handbill, in-

formed Don Espriella that his pills always performed and even exceeded whatever he promised, as if they were impatient of immortal and universal fame.

The ceremony of proclaiming peace, suggested to Don Espriella that the English understand nothing of out-door pageantry; nor have they since improved their understandings in this matter. But the illumination was impressive, because the mob's habit of breaking every window that was not filled with candles—whether they should be arranged in straight lines or arches was the only choice permitted to the householder—secured a wonderful completeness in the lighting of the streets. The streets were thronged, the middle of them filled with coaches locked together, much as happens at illuminations now-a-days. But the effect of the old system of lighting all the windows in a street, whether or not there were coloured oil lamps and transparencies, must have been more striking than our intermittent flare of gas in ciphers, crowns, and stars. The grand illumination to which sightseers pressed in April eighteen hundred and two, was at the house of M. Otto, the French Ambassador, in Portman-square. The inscription on his house was, "Peace and Amity." It had been "Peace and Concord," but a party of sailors who went by in the morning had insisted that they were not conquered, and that no Frenchman should say so.

Another event of that time to which Espriella gives a letter, was the execution of Governor Wall for flogging soldiers to death at Goree. Mutineers in the fleet had recently been hanged; and the hanging of the detested Governor Wall was looked upon as earnest of equal laws. When he came on the gallows, he was received by a vast mob with three huzzas, and basket-women under him were drinking to his damnation in gin and brimstone. When the drop fell, the mob began their huzzas again, but instead of proceeding to the usual three cheers, stopped suddenly at the first cheer, and became silent. The revengeful joy, bad as it was, had been based on humanity; and, wrote Southey, "the sudden extinction of that joy, the feeling which at one moment struck so many thousands, stopped their acclamations at once, and awed them into a dead silence when they saw the object of their hatred in the act and agony of death, is surely as honourable to the popular character as any trait which I have seen recorded of any people in any age or country."

And then he proceeds to condemn the barbarousness of the martial laws of England. Nobody seemed to recollect that Governor Wall was hanged, not for having flogged three men to death, but for an informality in the mode of doing it. Had he called a drumhead court martial, the same sentence might have been inflicted, and the same consequences have ensued, with perfect impunity to himself. For in those days, an offender was sometimes sentenced to a thousand lashes. A surgeon stood by to feel his pulse during the execution, and determine how long the flogging could be continued without killing him. When human nature could sustain no more, he was remanded to prison; his wound—for from the shoulders to the loins it left him one great wound—was dressed, and as soon as it was sufficiently healed to be laid open again in the same manner, he was brought out again to undergo the remainder of his sentence. So Robert Southey wrote in his assumed character of Don Manuel Alvarez Espriella.

We turn to a few lighter shades of English manners at the outset of the nineteenth century. The huge and hideous wig, once worn by all the learned, and worn still by our judges, had then been discarded by physicians, but was to be met with in the streets upon the heads of schoolmasters and doctors of divinity. Don Manuel, when he described the luxuries of London diet, told how soda-water and other factitious waters had become fashionable, and added that the common water was abominable: being either from a vapid canal in which all the rabble of the outskirts washed themselves in summer, or from the Thames, which received all the filth of the City. Over his friend's mahogany, he told the history of the introduction of that wood into our households. A West Indian captain, about a century before, had brought some logs of it as ballast for his ship, and gave them to his brother Dr. Gibbons, an eminent physician, who was then building a house. The wood was thrown aside as too hard for the workmen's tools. Some time afterwards, his wife wanted a candle-box. The doctor thought of the West Indian wood, and out of that the box was made. Its colour and polish tempted the doctor to have a bureau made of the same material, and this was thought so beautiful that it was shown to all his friends. The Duchess of Buckingham, who came to look at it, begged wood enough to make another bureau for herself. Then the demand arose for more, and Honduras mahogany became a common article of trade.

The passion for collecting, in which the actual desirableness of the thing collected goes for little, was as great sixty years ago, as in these days which produce a Postage Stamp Collector's Manual. There was a superstition that a Queen Anne's farthing was worth five hundred pounds; and Southey vouches for the story of a pettifogging lawyer, as ignorant as he was villainous, who suborned a soldier to charge a man with robbing him on the highway of eight pounds, some silver, and a Queen Anne's farthing. The accused man was able to prove his innocence, and the lawyer failed in his plot to hang him that he might obtain possession of the farthing. At a sale of curiosities a single shell was bought at a very high price. The buyer held it up to the company: "There are but two specimens of this shell," said he, "known to be in existence, and I have the other," and he set his foot upon it and crushed it to pieces.

Espriella condemned capital punishments for

forgery, denied that they were preventive, and made no account of the judge who, when a man about to be sentenced to death for horse stealing said it was hard he should lose his life for only stealing a horse, replied, "You are not to be hanged for stealing a horse, but in order that horses may not be stolen."

Don Manuel remarked upon the holiday migration of the English. Two generations before his time, mineral springs were the only places of such holiday resort; but then, in the beginning of the century, the steady movement of holiday-makers to the coast had fairly begun. He wrote also that within the last thirty years a taste for the picturesque had sprung up, and so, while one of the flocks of fashion migrated to the sea-coast, another flew off to the mountains of Wales, to the Lakes, or to Scotland. He should himself, he said, follow the fashion and go to the lakes. Holiday question is now often complicated with another question that in the first instance is said to have been confined to London. At the beginning of the century the King of England had a regular bug-destroyer in his household, a relic of dirtier times. This suggests mention that the objectionable creature was the gift of France to her neighbour. An English traveller of the earlier part of the seventeenth century calls it, says Southey, the French punaise. It was entered to the port of London, and when first received into our country districts, was known always as the London bug.

Espriella visited Oxford and Cambridge, Birmingham, Manchester, and Liverpool, as well as the Lakes; but we shall not follow him out of London. Here, in the way of fashion, he found women more extravagant than men; to be more foolish, he said, was impossible. For instance, a fashion had then lately been started in Bond-street, of oiling a gentleman's coat and cold-pressing it. This gave it a high gloss; but as every particle of dust stuck to it, the coat, after it had been worn three or four times, was unfit to be seen. Fashion regulated whether a coat should be worn open, or buttoned; and if buttoned, whether by one button or two, and by which. Sometimes a cane was to be carried, sometimes a club, sometimes a common twig. At one time every man walked the streets with his hands in his coat pockets. Espriella found a professor in Bond-street who, in lessons at half a guinea, taught gentlemen the art of tying their neckerchiefs in the newest style. Men were as far as women from satisfying Feyjoo, who said, "All new fashions offend me except those which either circumscribe expense or add to decency."

Of newspapers at the beginning of this century, which had the greatest sale, four or five thousand were printed, and it was thought marvellous that there were a quarter of a million of people in England who read the news every day and conversed upon it. Indeed the sense of over development was so strong, that the English philosophers and politicians, both male and female, were in a state of great alarm. "It has been discovered," Espriella writes, "that the world is over peopled, and that it must always be so, from an error in the constitution of nature; that the law which says, 'Increase and multiply,' was given without sufficient consideration; in short, that He who made the world does not know how to manage it properly, and therefore there are serious thoughts of requesting the English Parliament to take the business out of His hands."

CARNATIONS AND GILLYVORS.

The poet who "was not of an age but for all time," with reference to what he called the "piedness" of flowers, speaks of an art which he says, "does mend Nature, change it rather; but," he adds, "the art itself is Nature." We may consider, if we please, poems, pictures, and statues to be the correspondents of such flowers in the garden of intellect. "To me," wrote a recent poet-laureate, who was not too proud to describe the habits of the peasantry of our English lakes:

> To me the meanest flower that blows can give
> Thoughts that do even lie too deep for tears.

Perdita, in whose person Shakespeare utters the words of wisdom we have quoted concerning the practice of gardeners, preferred the more simple and natural products of the nursery. "The year growing ancient," says this prettiest and most poetic of foundlings:

> Nor yet on summer's death, nor on the birth
> Of trembling winter, the fairest flowers of the season
> Are our carnations and streaked gillyvors,
> Which some call nature's bastards; of that kind
> Our rustic gardens barren; and I care not
> To get slips of them.

Further on, the fair shepherdess grows more energetic, and exclaims:

> I'll not put
> The dibble in earth to set one slip of them.

The natural, pure, and simple, has had distinguished followers among our poets and romancers past and present. Our younger bards, however, and some of them of no mean promise, have lately aimed at a classicality of theme and an ornateness of style, which stands in striking contrast with the subjects and methods of their immediate predecessors. Even in treating the more familiar aspects, whether of nature or society, in spite of the charming Perdita's energetic protest, they persistently prefer the "painted face" to the "untouched" countenance.

Society, too, follows in the wake of art and literature. Not only would we have our photographs coloured, but the belle of the modern ball-room adds to her own attractions by a little rouge.

Something is to be said on the other side, and our great poet has said it. The artificiality of our modern life is not a whit less natural than the simplicity of the antique time. Improved nature is still nature; although it may be

assuredly questioned whether the specific alteration is an improvement. On this point the young and the old will probably differ. Illegitimate sources of attraction are much sought by the rising generation, not only in the drama, but in general literature, and in natural life. As these prevail, they become lawful, and in time grow to be classical. Few poems are now purely natural. The railways have brought the country and the town into such close relationship, that the young lady from the former has already the tastes and airs of the latter. Simplicity and innocence are not even assumed. But we should recollect that with them much rusticity and ignorance have also departed, and that we get on more pleasantly and smoothly together than we did. We can scarcely form a conception of the inconvenience suffered by all classes of society, even in the century preceding our own. When Hogarth undertook to paint the familiar things of our every-day life, the perils that beset every path of it, whether in town or in country, were such as would scarcely be tolerated now, even in imagination.

The state of things in the more remote past is, indeed, scarcely conceivable at the present day. It has been justly said that they who have never experienced the want of the luxuries and conveniences of every description which London and other great cities and towns of England now afford, cannot readily understand in what manner our ancestors contrived to pass their lives in any degree of comfort, with their unpaved, unlighted, undrained streets —without water conveyed to their doors by pipes or aqueducts—without hackney-coaches, hansoms, or omnibusses, or other light vehicles for travelling—without a general penny post—without a thousand other petty accommodations, the privation of any one of which would grievously disturb the temper and affect the comforts of the present generation.

If Perdita were now living, she might considerably modify her opinion concerning carnations and gillyvors, at least in their social and moral applications. Have not gas and police done much for the well-being of society as well as for its safety? With the march of material improvement, moral propriety keeps pace; but the latter is dependent on the former to a greater extent than is generally believed. The artificial comes wonderfully in aid of the natural; and metropolitan manners sit gracefully on the country youth of both sexes, who only a few years ago would have been remarked for their rustic rudeness, timidity, and inexperience. The hoyden and bumpkin have disappeared, and the well behaved and competently instructed maiden, and her well-dressed brother or lover, have taken their places. They now mix in London society with an ease and pleasure, of which their class in former days was incapable. The old marks of distinction are becoming obliterated, and the individual characteristics that grew out of them have become obsolete. Pardita herself would prove to be a carnation were she now introduced to a London ball-room, and yet feel quite as natural as a simple "primrose by the river's brim."

These remarks might be much extended in their application, and enforced by reflections relative to the interaction of the natural and artificial in modern social arrangements, and the gay appearance thereby induced on the face of things in general. Nor need we doubt the reality of the improvement in manners witnessed, when we remember that the art employed in the transmutation, on the word of the great authority we have cited, is rightly to be regarded as "itself Nature." There is, therefore, in these illegitimate doings, a legitimacy to be recognised; they are, after all, in due order and course; and have as much right in our more polished botanical haunts, as the simple natural products of the earth in the "rustic garden." So much may be urged to reconcile the timid and aged to the signs of change and progress that multiply wherever we direct our attention; and with this assurance we close the somewhat fantastical statement we have ventured to make of a series of facts sufficiently obvious to the intelligent observer.

THE STUDIOUS RESURRECTIONIST.

Mr. Pegden spent all his time with his customers; that is, when he had any to spare, was not in bed, or nursing the baby, or killing a pig. He had something to do with smoking the hams, assisting Mrs. Pegden in that department; and as he had a "herring hang" at the back of the premises, possibly he attended to that line of business too.

The "Three Squirrels" is a very lonely, out-of-the-way place. It does not even stand on the high road, but on a sort of parish bye way, and on the skirts of a little wood in a district wild and thinly populated. It is indeed an "ellinge" place, as we say in Kent, but some how or the other, the Jutes or old English settlers found it out, and made, twelve or thirteen hundred years ago, a burying place within its borders. I had come hither to the diggings, and finding it inconvenient to go home while at work on the graves, I put up at the Three Squirrels. There are no indigenous supplies but salt pork and smoked herrings, except when a pig is killed, or a rabbit is caught in a wire. But zeal in one's profession gives one the power of digesting salt pork and smoked herring for many successive days.

I had discovered an Anglo-Saxon cemetery between the hills, in a field which had been for ages devoted to tillage. The discovery made me a happy creature, and when the harvest was gathered in, I came to my diggings.

One day, after a search more than usually laborious, I had retired to the inn, and to what accommodation and refreshment it afforded. It was late in autumn. The days were short, the weather was chilly, and after some stiff work as a resurrectionist I liked the crackle and

blaze of a fire of well dried stumps of the old disused poles of a neighbouring hop garden.

The letter carrier of the district, taking an hour's rest before he started on his weary homeward route of seven miles, to the post town on the coast, was a nice fellow. And it was nice, likewise, to feel that it was not I who had to trudge out collecting from bye stations and little hamlets a few letters, sometimes a single one, to add to the Niagara of correspondence that would be poured during the night into the vast—shall I say, basin—of St. Martin-le-Grand.

Here was also the village blacksmith, an exceedingly good fellow. His thin, well-marked features could twist into a benevolent sort of smile, when any remark gave him peculiar satisfaction; and everything pleased him peculiarly. He loved a joke, although he had given up laughing, and transferred his entire stock of laughter to the twinkle of his eye. Particularly his eye twinkled at a joke at the expense of the landlord, for whom he had a cheery and convivial hatred.

Two or three other guests were present, I remember: mere country fellows, but good fellows, taking their pints of beer or ale, before they resumed their walks—I was not going to resume my walk that night—to their somewhat distant homes. Our village—I suppose it was a village, for it had a parish church—consisted of a couple of farm houses, and half a dozen cottages on very distant terms with one another. Street there was none, and the only shop I ever saw in those parts was the home of the carrier, who went twice a week to a remote town, with an old horse and an older van, and whose wife diverted her attention from his absence by selling lucifer matches, balls of string, dips, bulls' eyes, and farthing rushlights. She also washed the clergyman's surplice, and kept the keys of the parish church, which was occasionally visited by gentlemen concerned in old graves—gentlemen, in short, of my profession—to inspect a very ancient brass of Sir Peter de Craon, unhelmed, in chain mail, standing on a lion couchant.

"What luck to-day, sir?" asked my landlord, as I joined the delightful circle of his customers, around the crackle of the hop sticks. "I see you have brought home some things. Suppose you have made up your mind there is no harm in digging up those poor chaps' bones?"

"Not much," I said. "I always bury them again."

"That's very good of you, sir. Yes, sir, Parson couldn't do more. But what have you here?" he said, taking up a black earthen urn, which I had just placed on the table before me, that my eyes might sup on it.

"An olla," I said.

"A holler! What? With a whoop?" And they all enjoyed his little joke.

"No," I said, "it is not hooped. This is a vessel placed in the grave of the deceased person; but for what especial use, or to what signification dedicated, it might be difficult to determine. Which is what makes it most interesting. Nobody can tell its use."

"Would you tell me," said a tall man in rusty black, the scholar of the village, "would you tell me how you discover graves; and what great battle it was in which these persons were killed?"

"As for the battle, it was the battle of life in which we shall all have our own time for being knocked over. Here was the regular cemetery or burial place of the forefathers of this hamlet, perhaps in heathen times, probably about the sixth or seventh century of our era."

"Not an ordinary battle, sir? And yet you have found swords, spear-heads, and knives?"

"Yes," I said, "and the beads, earrings, and brooches of women, their household keys, and the toys and trinkets of their children. In fact, men, women, and children, went to their last beds in the cemetery up on the hillside yonder, much as they do now in the churchyard at its feet. Not in coffins, perhaps, but as carefully and I dare say as reverently buried, as they are to-day."

"Ay, ay, Reverently buried," said the landlord, laying all the stress he could upon the word by his manner of cramming fresh tobacco into his pipe—"Reverently buried. And it may be, quite as reverently dug up again."

I took no notice of this side thrust, but turned to my friend in rusty black, who was no less a personage than the master of the parochial school. "You ask how we find these graves? If there be no tumuli, nor 'barrows,' as they are called, we owe our first hint of them to accident. The Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Sarr, where nearly three hundred graves were opened, was first discovered when the owner of a windmill resolved to set up a steam-engine. While digging for the erection of it, they found an old grave full of rich remains, the gold coins of Frankish kings, an amber necklace; brooches set with ivory, blood stones, and garnets; and at the feet of the skeleton a brazen stoup or caldron. In the same manner, the cutting out of a roadway in your parish revealed the first signs of this cemetery, probably of a kindred tribe of ancient settlers."

"Then you trench the field until you come upon a grave?" said the schoolmaster."

"Not so," said I. "The proceeding is much simpler. Luckily, as at Sarr, the undersoil is of chalk, and in the ground where I have been working, the depth of the upper soil varies only from nine to eighteen inches. We have but to take a spear and probe the ground. The point strikes bottom soon, if there be no hole in the chalk. But where there has been a grave dug, down the spear goes into it. To be quite sure of a find, I try all around, and when I have shaped out a grave begin my digging."

"And what then?"

"Then, when we get within a foot or nine inches of the floor of the grave, or less, according to conditions that are found by

probing, we throw aside spade and mattock, and with a small trowel carefully remove the soil: beginning with the feet of the skeleton, and working upward. The soil so removed is most carefully examined, and even sometimes sifted; for minute beads and other small articles are occasionally found at the head and centre of the grave. At the feet, an earthen vase is occasionally placed; sometimes, though very rarely, a vessel of glass. By the waist, if the grave be that of a female, we find at times a brooch, a bronze buckle, or a girdle ornament; often a bunch of common keys, oftener a knife. The knife may have traces about it of its wooden case or sheath; the 'keys' were probably the distinguishing mark of a woman with a household, as the spear-head was of every adult male amongst these old Englishmen. The spindle whorl in the midland and some of the southern counties amongst the Anglo and West Saxons takes the place of the keys, or is the distinguishing mark in female graves. We find by the neck, necklaces of beads, clay, porcelain, glass, amber, and sometimes of amethystine quartz."

"Well, but these are not much of prizes, master!"

"The great prizes of those graves, such as not one perhaps in a hundred yields, even among rich Jutish tribes, is the splendid fibula, such as that of Kingston, or of Sarr, the gilded braid around the skull, inwoven with amber beads, perhaps, the 'bulla' or the golden medals similar to those found at Sarr also. In a few instances, and then almost confined to East Kent, have been found those peculiar glasses, knobbed on the outside, as if adorned with falling tear drops. They were fashioned, as I believe, specially for sepulchral purposes. In the grave of the warrior we ordinarily find the spearhead, by the right side or ear; its iron ferrule by the right foot; the umbo or central boss of the shield, on or near the breast. More rarely, an ornamented buckle, bronze gilded, by the waist, and near it the great two-edged Northman's sword. This instrument, about three feet long, blade and heft, and sometimes two and a half inches wide, lies generally by the left side."

"Blest if the old gent doesn't think he's at a mechanics' institution," I heard the postman grunt, as he sat up and shook himself. I made allowance for the irritability that commonly attends the act of rousing out of sleep.

"Many graves," I went on, in a conciliatory tone, "scarcely yield me a relic; a rusty knife only, perhaps; or a solitary bead of clay. I have been speaking, gentlemen, of the richest and most valuable interments—those, perhaps, of the ladies of the Sept or tribe, the chieftains and captains of the Hundred, or other distinguished men. Among the anomalies found in these Jutish or Anglo-Saxon graves, I may notice bronze tweezers, iron or bronze shears, horsebits, whetstones, pursemounts, axes, studs of bronze, tags for straps, spindle whorls, foreign shells, such as the Cyprea, common cowries, bits of Roman glass, fragments of the red glazed pottery or Samian ware; Roman coins, pierced for suspension and stored as curiosities, sometimes appear. Various small articles also occur occasionally: bronze bodkins or needles, scissors, pins of ivory or of metal, earrings, little silver wire finger-rings—all forming, doubtless, the trosseaux of a female grave.

"I have some of these relics before me," I said. "This little object, scarcely in diameter exceeding half an inch, is a saucer-shaped tibula, a rare type for a Kentish grave, but common enough in the Saxon cemeteries of Wiltshire and some midland counties. It bears the rude effigy of a face in the centre, and the flat border surrounding the face has been gilded; here also, I have a small bronze key, with a hollow stem and wards. Hitherto, the key has been pronounced to be of Roman handicraft, when found in the tumuli of Kent. But I have reason to doubt the accuracy of such a classification, which assumes them to be plunder, or waifs from Roman villas or possessions. The key in question was found close to the remains of a wooden box; indeed some of the very wood was adhering to its wards."

"But this dark-coloured 'urn' as you call it," said the blacksmith, twinkling all over with evident amusement at what I had been telling him, and handling the urn to my consternation somewhat as he would a cold horseshoe. "You found it in the grave, I believe? Did the Romans always carry pots off with them when they died?"

"Generally, sir, their graves contain pottery, if that is what you mean. Generally; that is, when they practised cremation or burning their dead; and in various descriptions of vessels the mortuary ashes have been found enclosed, such as the common 'Upchurch' urns of black ware, in the large amphora used as wine vessels, or in glass vessels, carefully protected, and sometimes enclosed even in the amphora, and in oil vats, but why these Anglo-Saxons, Jutes, or 'old Englishmen,' who practised inhumation, that is, buried their dead, should have placed earthen vessels in the graves of their deceased friends, I know not, unless from some vague idea that the food or nutriment (if such were placed in them) might be useful to the wants of the deceased hereafter. Sometimes, the pottery consisted of long-necked bottle-shaped vessels, like the little urn on the table. I found it this day, beyond the head of a skeleton; an iron spear-head lying close to it, in fact touching it; a little cist or hollow having been carefully cut in the chalk. As I removed the loose pieces with my hand, the side of the urn came into view; two pieces of chalk supported a slab placed horizontally above it; the urn itself was filled to the brim with water which shimmered in it crystal bright."

"What? Buried twelve hundred years; with the water preserved in it? Never!"

"I did not say so," I replied, "the original contents, whatever they were—beer, mead, or nectar—had long since vanished. The pure water, drop by drop had percolated through

the chalk above, and when it filled, drop by drop, ran over, for I found the sides of the urn bright and moist."

"I will never believe that a pot was found full of water, after it had been buried four feet in the chalk so many years. Never, never!" said the landlord, with that sort of capricious incredulity, which I have often found in men of his class, who would believe anything in the spiritual world—ghosts, fairies, and cunning men and women—but stand aghast at any natural event, a little beyond the range of their daily experience.

"Twelve hundred years!" said the schoolmaster, "and found this day full of water as bright and pure as when first poured into it! Wonderful, indeed!"

"Ay, wonderful indeed," said the landlord, "if you are able to believe it. If it had been keeping ale now—but there, master, we've had enough about your churchyard. I could tell a tale now out of *our* churchyard."

"Yes, yes," said the blacksmith; "let our friend Pegden tell it; he likes it, and don't let any one spoil it."

"Which is what you always want to do," said the landlord. "But as my honourable customer on the right," looking at me, "has had his say, I'll have mine.

"Well, it was just before church time; the sexton had been digging a grave; and had nearly finished it, when the bell went for church, and the parson and the parishioners, some ten or twelve maybe, for it was a cold winterish afternoon in March, came into the churchyard, altogether like, and so the sexton puts by his spade, and pick, hides them up as well as he can under the mould, because of those varmint boys, and gets out of his grave to go to church. By-and-by, come three or four of these young vagabonds, not to go to church, not they, but to play leapfrog over the tombstones, and other devilry. Well, and so these young rapscallions what did they do but jump into the grave. 'Oho!' says one, 'here's a pretty go! old Simon has left his pick and spade. Let's have a dig.' Asking your pardon, sir, them boys was as fond as you are of a dig at a grave, and, says they, 'we may find something.' Well, and so they dug and they dug, and as ill-luck would have it, close to the head of another grave—not but what there is plenty of room in our churchyard—and so they dug out a skull. Well, they took the skull up with a wild shout, set it down on the turf beside the grave, and began talking to it. 'Now, what have you to say for yourself, old grim jaws?' says one. 'Where's the old furry cap you used to wear?' says another, 'for it's old Jeff,' says he, 'he always wore a furry cap, and had two teeth broke out in front, just like this old fellow.' 'Not a bit of it,' says another, 'it's not Jeff, it's the old pedlar chap that was silly, like, and used to stand on his head, agin the church wall, when any one offered him a halfpenny. Ay, ay, it's old Bony himself. I wonder if he can dance now, and stir his stumps as he used to do!'

"No sooner said than done; the skull heard them wicked young radicals, and it turned over! Yes, bless you, sir! Of its own accord! Without being touched, and against the wind, sir, it turned over and over on the grass, and not downhill neither, but slowly, I heard them say, very slowly at first, sometimes stopping a bit, as if to wait for breath, but still over and over and on and on, straight towards the church. Them wicked young radicals scrambled out of the grave, and well they might. One went off clean 'haired' or 'dazed,' screeching and holloaing, towards the village. The others, after standing dumb-foundered like, as if they could not believe their eyes, cut off in different directions. On went the skull, till it came right agin the church where the poor old pedlar used to stand, and there it stood on its head, just as the old pedlar used to do."

"That's according to what you've been told," said the blacksmith, sententiously. "But look 'ee here, master; I know the end o' that story. I was coming late to church. My poor old woman had just had one of her fits again, so I had had to go to the doctor; and when I found her comfortable, I hurried off to church, just in time, I thought, for the sermon. Our parson spins a good yarn that way; any time you look in, he's safe not to have done. Well, sir, I saw these boys a running off as the skull made its last turn or two, until it ran up to the wall."

"Stuff!" said the landlord. "Nobody believes you were within a mile of seeing it."

"Indeed, sir, I was almost as much frightened as the boys; but I plucked up a good heart, went straight up to the skull, and was about to lay hold of it, when, from the lower part—by the throat, I think—out jumped the finest mole I ever see in this country."

The landlord kicked the little table aside on which stood his empty tumbler; the clock struck eleven; the landlady, like a figure on the top of a Dutch timepiece, suddenly popped into sight, and carried off her spouse; the guests disappeared; and I was soon coiled up asleep, in the nest of the Three Squirrels.

THE NEW SERIAL TALE, HESTER'S HISTORY, commenced in the present number, will be continued from week to week until completed in the present volume.

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HESTER'S HISTORY.

A NEW SERIAL TALE.

CHAPTER III. HESTER, A DRESSMAKER'S APPRENTICE.

So, after a few more days, Hester was transferred to a new abode, a needle and thread were put into her hand, and she was told that she had become a dressmaker's apprentice.

She sat in a gloomy room and sewed long seams without lifting her eyes. All round her were busy chattering young women, whose conversation informed her that they were well supplied with fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters. Their gossip was of vulgar beaux and holiday treats, the last visit to the pit of the theatre, the next Sunday's excursion to Ranelagh or Richmond. They criticised Hester, even audibly, when the mistress was out of the room, remarked on her outgrown frocks and broken boots, and tittered at the blushes in her face. By-and-by, when they began to suspect that pride as well as shyness kept her sitting in her corner aloof, they mercilessly sneered her down. There was Hester, desolate, against a whole laughing, joking, jeering band.

The mistress of the establishment was not an unkind woman, but her windows full of millinery were an ornament to Sloane-street, and she lived amongst her bonnets and feathers. Her shop was gay, and her customers were many, and she had little time to notice Hester Cashel. She did not know that the girl was unhappy. But Hester was learning her business, all the more surely and rapidly, because of her painful isolation in the workroom. Hasty stitches had to do instead of sighs, and anxiety for the pattern of a trimming, or the goring of a skirt, often held off the necessity for tears. But by-and-by the assistant in the workroom began to whisper to the mistress that "that girl 'Ester had uncommon nice taste." And presently the apprentices began to pause in their persecution and stare when particular work was handed over their heads, and entrusted to the fingers of their victim.

After some time it dawned upon Hester that she was growing quite expert at her business. She could cut out a satin bodice, and plait in a voluminous court train to fit a dainty waist as deftly as any mistress of the art who ever handled a needle. She had also devices of her own in the matter of trimmings which were apt to charm the fancy of fine customers. "Give it to young Cashel," the mistress would say at length, whenever there was anything pretty to be done.

She was seventeen by the time this point was gained, and womanhood was beginning to look out of her troubled eyes. She was still shabby Hester, untidy Hester, in spite of all her efforts to be neat; and the envy of others did not fail to make her conscious of her needs. Things that had once been indifferent now pressed upon her sorely. Shame oppressed, and bitterness afflicted her. The past, with its intervals of sunshine, was gone, and the fulness of the present was swelling painfully around her.

There came a day, however, when the sneers and the insults that had harassed her were silenced. Hester spoke out once, and frightened her bugbear away for ever.

One day an unusual supply of nice work fell to her share. An envious spirit had been making merry all the morning over the "embroidery," as she called the poor stains and discolourments of Miss Cashel's frock. Hester suddenly stood up, and spoke as no one had ever heard her speak before.

"Young women!" she said, "for two years and a half I have borne your ill-usage; but I give you notice that I will bear it no longer. What if I am poor and friendless, and wear shabby clothes? Is it an insult to you? You should rather thank God that you at least have got plenty of fine flaunting gowns, and brass jewellery. If you please, then, you will annoy me no more."

It happened that the mistress entered the room just as Hester began to speak. The words "for two years and a half I have borne your ill-usage" smote her ears like a reproach; for she had known that there were many who were jealous of Hester. The girl did not attempt to hide her crimson cheeks and flashing eyes, but held herself erect amidst the amazement of the room, busying her trembling fingers with her work.

The apprentices sat thunderstricken, expecting a scene; but the mistress made no remark. It was in the middle of the night before that she had come upon Hester kneeling by her baby's crib, hushing the child to sleep, while the

nurse snored close by; and this mistress was not an unkind, nor a stupid woman.

That evening, just when it was time for the apprentices to go home, she made her appearance in the workroom with a parcel in her hand.

"'Ester Cashel," she said aloud, "I have brought you some fine gray stuff to make you a gown, a piece of black silk to make you a hapron, and a yard of blue ribbon that you may tie up your 'air as the other young women wear it. And as for the cost, I owe you much more than the price of these things for hover work, which you have cheerfully done."

The apprentices put on their bonnets in silence and went away to digest the shock. Hester was left sitting in the deserted workroom to plan and cut out her new dress. And she did it right skilfully.

"I declare that girl is quite a picture in her new things!" said the kindhearted milliner to her husband. "And I do wish that that fine lady who sent her here would take a little notice of her sometimes. She's different like from the other girls, and they're not kind to her, and she don't seem to take to hany of them. She never takes a 'oliday, and never gets a breath of hair unless I send her to the park with the children. She does her work well, but it's plain she's too good for it."

"Why does she grumble about it then?" asked the husband, a matter-of-fact person who kept his wife's accounts. These two worthies were at their tea when this conversation occurred, in their neat little parlour behind the shop.

"Grumble!" said the milliner. "Not a word out of her 'ead. And she'd work her fingers to the bone at a pinch. But it's plain to see she's been born and bred a lady. And I do wish that fine madam would come to see her now and again. I don't like the 'ole charge of such a one upon my shoulders."

It was characteristic of Lady Humphrey that one day about this time she made her appearance in our milliner's shop, being forgetful at the moment of the very existence of Hester. Her thoughts were very busy with strange matters at the time; but she wanted a new bonnet all the same.

"Sweetly pretty!" cried the milliner, taking a step backward, after having mounted her most stupendous chapeau on Lady Humphrey's severe buff braids. "How sweetly pretty to be sure! And how exceedingly thoughtful of your ladyship to remember poor 'Ester. For I don't take this favour to myself, your ladyship; you'll excuse me for saying that I know something of the 'uman 'eart, and I can see through a noble haction as plain as if it was a pane in this glass case."

Lady Humphrey was so amazed at this digression from ribbons and laces that she was silent for some moments, and sat gazing rather suspiciously at the clever little woman, who, with her head on one side in the most innocent attitude, was busy snipping out an objectionable flower from the trimming of the headgear that had been purchased.

"I can see, too, that your ladyship is annoyed," she added, deprecatingly, "because I have served you myself instead of sending for 'Ester. But I assure your ladyship that she is hout on particular business of mine. I would not have disappointed your ladyship for the world. Had I known you was coming I should have gone hout myself sooner than sent her from 'ome. But about the dress, your ladyship; plum-coloured satin I think your ladyship said, with a tucker of point round the bosom, and a little flounce of the own round the 'em of the skirt. Very 'andsome indeed, it will be, and shall 'Ester go out to fit it on?"

Lady Humphrey could think of no particular reason why Hester should not fit on the dress. And so the milliner had her own way.

"Very hanxious she was to see you, my dear," she said to Hester on her return after Lady Humphrey's departure; "and a very nice little hout it will be for you; which you want it, if hever a girl did."

"I'd rather not go, ma'am," said Hester, doubtfully. "I wish you would send one of the other young women."

"Nonsense!" cried the milliner. "After all the arrangements I 'ave made. I sent to Mrs. Patacake's in Knightsbridge for a sally-lun, and you shall have a cup of tea and a shrimp with me hearly, and a new ribbon for your bonnet, so that you may go on your business in the cool of the evening; for sure I am she will keep you all night."

So Hester brightened up, and fell to trimming her bonnet. She thought that Lady Humphrey must have been wonderfully kind when the milliner spoke so confidently.

That very evening about sunset a young man on horseback came cantering up the high street of Richmond, rode across the bridge, and took his way through Bushy Park towards Hampton Court. He was a very handsome young man, with a dark face, which ought to have looked pleasant, but his brows were knit now, and he looked rather fierce and troubled. Whatever were his uncomfortable reflections they were speedily disturbed by the shouting of boys' voices, a great clapping of hands, hissings, and the barking of a dog. A little farther on he met a group of ill-looking urchins, cheering in great delight; and a little farther still, in the distance among the trees, he espied the cause of their amusement. He saw an ugly dog barking and jumping, and the figure of a young girl drawn up against a tree for protection, her little grey cloak almost torn from her shoulders, her bonnet hanging back upon her neck. One hand grasping a parcel was held high above her head, while with the other she kept beating down the dog, which flew savagely at her arm and her shoulder, sometimes leaping almost as high as the parcel in her hand.

"Fetch it, good dog! fetch it!" cried the boys, with roars of laughter.

"Oh, the satin, the satin!" the girl kept

saying, desperately, too busy defending herself to cry out or make a noise. "Oh, the satin, the satin!"

And all the while the dog was leaping higher and higher, the girl's weary arm was relaxing, and the sun was coming dancing through the swaying branches, glittering over her bare yellow head and flushed face, as if in sheer merry mockery of her terror.

Then up dashed the rider. A few skilful cuts with his whip sent the enemy, dog and boys together, all howling in chorus, and flying at their utmost speed.

"The little devils! I have a mind to ride after them," said the rider.

"Oh, please, don't punish them any more," said Hester. "They are only children, and they didn't mean to hurt."

By this time Hester had put her cloak straight, and was tying her bonnet strings, and tightening the bindings of her parcel, containing the plum-coloured satin for Lady Humphrey's new dress. And the stranger was observing her earnestly.

"I cannot be mistaken," he said at last; "you are Hester Cashel."

"Yes," said Hester, smiling, "and you are Mr. Humphrey."

"And how in the name of wonder," said he, "do you come to be here alone with that great parcel on your hands? When did you return from your school in France?"

"I never was at school in France," said Hester.

"My mother told me——" he muttered, and stopped suddenly.

Hester turned pale. She had been indulging all the day in I know not what pleasant visions of a kinder and more helpful Lady Humphrey than she had ever yet known to be met with at the end of this journey. Her old distrust of her benefactress was roused now at a word; and she wished herself back again in Sloane-street.

"Why will you not shake hands with me, little Hester?" asked Pierce Humphrey, as the girl persisted in not noticing his outstretched hand.

Hester hesitated a moment, then laid her hand frankly and gravely on his, with an air as if to say, "I will do it for this once."

"What is the drawback?" asked Pierce, smiling.

"Why you see," said Hester, hugging her parcel, and regarding the young officer with a business-like air, "when I knew you before I was a sort of young lady with your mother up yonder, but now I am a dressmaker's apprentice. I am only the young person from Mrs. Gossamer's coming out to fit on Lady Humphrey's new gown. And dressmakers' apprentices are not expected to shake hands with officers in the king's service."

"Well, upon my word! what a bit of pride to be sure! A dressmaker's apprentice. I must see what is the meaning of this. A dressmaker's apprentice! You no more look the part than I look like the Emperor of China. Why, Hester, your father was a gentleman."

"No matter," said Hester, with an imperious little nod of the head that shook two great tears from her eye-lashes. I earn the bread I eat, and that is better than being lady or gentleman. It is late now, Mr. Humphrey, and I must get on to the palace. I am very much obliged to you for sending that dog away."

"But you are not going to carry that great parcel," said Pierce Humphrey. "Give it me and I will lay it across my saddle. I am going to the palace also."

"You forget how the people would laugh," said Hester, smiling in quite a motherly way at his good nature.

The young soldier reflected a little, and did not urge this point.

"Well, at least, I insist upon your allowing me to escort you," he persisted.

But Hester remembered some holiday adventures related by one Sally Perkins in the workroom, and she steadfastly refused the honour of Mr. Humphrey's protection on her way.

"You will give me pain if you do," she said earnestly.

"Then I will not give you pain," said Pierce Humphrey, gallantly, and he rode off at a quick pace towards the palace.

CHAPTER IV. LADY HUMPHREY'S DREAM.

By the time Hester arrived, Lady Humphrey was busy entertaining her son. As they sat together, she looking at him constantly, her face was softened and altered. He was her pearl of price, her single possession. It was the one great provocation that kept all her life angry, the fact that this son was poor. She could not thank Providence for anything that befel her, because this glorious creature had not been born a millionnaire.

She had never shown him much tenderness of manner, she had chafed with him always when there was a question of money, she had expected from him much homage and obedience; but she had worked for him all his life. And she had worked without success. By the assistance of a cunning man of business she had thrown herself desperately into one speculation after another, and had uniformly failed in all. She was poorer at this moment than ever she had been before she had begun to plan and scheme. And Pierce was deeply in debt, had a talent for getting into debt which would be sure to reach a rare state of development in the future, in the fostering atmosphere of good society, and with the constant culture of expensive habits and a generous disposition. At this present moment Lady Humphrey was bankrupt in pocket, and embittered at heart. There was just one bright streak on her horizon, and she was speedily to see it overcast.

She had been sitting at her writing desk, a seat where she was often to be found, and she had been casting up figures in a dreary looking book. She was so anxious to gain money, this

woman, so terribly, hopelessly determined to find possessions for her son. He had interrupted her at her task, and she sat opposite to him now, erect and grim, eager to question, to find fault, to direct. She did not kiss him, nor hold his hand, nor sit close to him, as many a fond lonely mother would have done. She only opened her grey eyes very widely, and gloated over him. He did not think she was very pleased to see him, this son. He never had felt she was at any time very glad of his society. Yet Lady Humphrey was a woman of strong passions, and love of her handsome Pierce was the strongest passion within her, except one.

As the two sat together there was a strange likeness and unlikeness between them. The likeness was in the shape and setting of the eye, the unlikeness in its glance and colour. The likeness was in the massive cast of the nose and chin, the unlikeness in the workings of the mouth. The woman's face was all intellect and frozen passion. In the man's no marks were to be traced but those of gaiety and softness of heart, though a petulant trouble overcast it at this moment.

"Well, Pierce, what news?" asked Lady Humphrey, anxiously, seeing that cloud upon her son's face.

"Oh, there is news of all kinds," said Pierce, carelessly. "Our colonel's wife gave a ball last night, and a rebellion in Ireland is more likely than ever."

"You do not look so dismal merely for a night's raking," said the mother, impatiently. "Neither are you greatly concerned in the affairs of Ireland. Let the savages cut their throats if they like it. It is no affair of yours, nor of mine. At this moment I want to hear about Janet Golden."

"Yet, news from Ireland and news of Janet might mean the same thing at this moment," said Pierce, in a caustic tone, most unusual with him, "Miss Golden being in Ireland."

"Miss Golden being in Ireland," Lady Humphrey repeated, as if assuring herself that the words had been said.

"In Ireland with Lady Helen Munro. And it's all over between us. We had a quarrel, and I was sulky, and behaved like an idiot. Lady Helen Munro arrived in town at a crisis, and Janet returned with her to her glens."

A heavy frown gathered on Lady Humphrey's brows at the first mention of the name Lady Helen Munro, and grew dark at every word that followed it.

"And you allowed this thing to happen?" she said, turning almost fiercely on her son.

"Allowed?" echoed the young man, bitterly. "My permission was not asked in the matter. My opinion was not consulted. We had a quarrel, as I have said. I sulked and stayed away from the place for a fortnight. When I returned at last I learned that Lady Helen Munro had been there, and was gone; and in place of Janet I found a small parcel containing the ring I had given her. No letter, no message. And more than this, when I saw her aunt, the old lady coolly reminded me of that story of a silly childish betrothal between Janet and Sir Archie Munro. She thought it very probable the old arrangement would be carried out now, according to the wishes of both families, that the marriage might take place this summer."

"Archie Munro!—Archie Munro!" murmured Lady Humphrey, almost in a whisper, and with an unwholesome light in her eyes. "I am very poor, Pierce, very poor, but I would risk ending my days in an almshouse to prevent such a marriage."

"Yes, mother, it was you who led me into this trouble," said Pierce, sadly. "I might never have met Janet had you not driven me to seek her for her money. I am punished now, for I love the girl, and I have lost her."

"All through your own foolish temper, as you confess," said his mother. "You have lost her for the moment, it is true, but you will find her again. She has gone off in a fit of pique, and is breaking her heart by this time. You must write to her at once, or follow her."

"I will do neither," said Pierce. "If I were not a poor man, and she a wealthy woman, I might think of it; but, as it is, let Sir Archie win her if he can. She must hold up a finger and beckon me before I go near her. I don't expect that she will do it, for she's prouder and stiffer than I am, if that be possible. So Sir Archie will get her, I suppose."

"Softly, Pierce; you run on too fast. I will own to you now that I know more of the progress of affairs in that wild country than I have led you to suppose. And, trust me, the coming year will be no time for marrying and giving in marriage in Ireland."

"Tush, mother! How women exaggerate all dangers. Some parts of the country are disturbed; but the glens will be quiet enough. Sir Archie's people are too happy in their lot to turn malcontents, and Sir Archie himself is as free to pursue the ways of peace in his castle at Glenluce, at this moment, as you or I. Only," he added, with a short laugh, "he has got a trifle better means of doing it."

"He may not be long in that condition," persisted Lady Humphrey, again in that soft voice. "Wiser men have not been able to keep free of suspicion in times of disturbance. Sir Archie has rebel blood in his veins."

"I wish him no evil," growled Pierce.

"Wishing will not alter fate," said Lady Humphrey. "I have more thoughts about these Irish people than you could imagine—more than you could imagine, you simple boy, if you sat here till midnight thinking about it. The danger of their position at this moment haunts me."

"I did not know you sympathised with them so very much," said Pierce, a little injured; "but of course they are old friends."

"Old friends," repeated Lady Humphrey, with a pitying, an almost tender glance at her son's troubled face.

"Older than I am," said Pierce, "therefore

you naturally dwell more on their concerns than mine." And he rose and walked about in a pet; like a cross schoolboy.

"It seems that your concerns have become strangely identical with theirs," said his mother. "Sit down, till I tell you a dream that I have had about you, and about them, a dream that has returned to me night after night, till I can think of nothing else."

Pierce made an impatient gesture, as if he would say that he was not in a humour for listening to the recital of dreams. But Lady Humphrey went on without heeding him.

"In this dream," she said, "I saw Sir Archie Munro discovered to be a rebel and a traitor, and banished from his country. And I saw his forfeited lands, his castle of Glenluce, and all his various possessions of many kinds bestowed by the king upon Pierce Humphrey."

"After the approved, but irregular fashion of dreams," said Pierce.

"Nay," said Lady Humphrey, "but such a proceeding would not be in the least irregular. For I thought," she said, laying her hand on her son's arm, and looking narrowly in his face, "I thought that the gift was made to Pierce Humphrey as a reward for loyal vigilance in a time of danger and treachery."

Honest Pierce returned her strange look with eyes full of uneasy wonder. "Mother," he said, putting her hand from him. "I do not understand your conversation to-day. You cannot wish that such a dream might come true. Your words would bear a construction which I will not dare to put upon them."

A look of contempt passed over Lady Humphrey's face. "You are a fool, Pierce," she said. "If you were a thousand times my son, you are a fool."

"Let me be a fool then," said Pierce. "And you mother? it is because you are my mother that I will not consent to understand you. I will try to forget what you have said, and we will talk of something else."

He walked once up and down the room, while his mother sat silent, with her face turned away from him, frowning out upon the glory of the sunset, burnished water gleaming through the hazy trees; flower-beds flaming out of the gilded turf, like spots of coloured fire. Lady Humphrey saw nothing of the scene. Her eyes took in neither colour nor light, but fixed themselves on a little black cloud in the distance, steadfastly, greedily, as upon something that she desired to possess.

"The young person is here from the dressmaker's, my lady," said a servant at the door.

"Take her to my dressing-room," said Lady Humphrey, "and tell her to wait till I am at leisure."

"The young person from the dressmaker's!" said Pierce when the servant had gone. "So this is to be the end of poor little Hester."

"How do you know that this is poor little Hester?" said Lady Humphrey.

"I met her coming out, that is all," he answered. "She would hardly shake hands with me, poor girl, she was so proud, and so humble. And she has the beauty and the bearing of a princess. 'Tis a sin not to let her be a lady."

"I have no objection to let her be a lady," said Lady Humphrey. "I only profess that I am not able to make her one. She must earn her own bread."

"'Twould be no great bounty to give bread to such a creature out of kindness," said Pierce.

"I gave it her when I could," said Lady Humphrey. "Now I can do no more than find my own. I have done well in giving her the means of supporting herself, and I desire that you will not interfere."

"Something must be done to place her among people in her own class of life," said Pierce, hotly. "You must think of it, mother, or you and I shall quarrel."

"It seems there are a great many points at issue between us," said Lady Humphrey, growing colder as he grew warm. "We must leave it to time to decide upon our differences."

"If you will do nothing, then, I shall see about it myself," said Pierce, angrily, taking up his hat. "I must ask you for Hester Cashel's address."

"Which I decidedly refuse to give you," said Lady Humphrey.

"In that case I must find it for myself," said Pierce. And then he wished his mother a good evening, and was gone.

After he had gone Lady Humphrey's eyes went back to her little black cloud, which had spread and increased as the sunset faded. Lady Humphrey's eyes now carried and added to it that last little fume of her son about Hester. So in that moment Hester's future was overcast with and wrapped up in the shadow of that cloud which was one day to burst on Lady Humphrey's enemies.

"But I will win fortune for you yet, you wrong-headed simpleton!" she said, addressing her absent son, "and I will lay it at your feet when you are least expecting it. And you shall walk over those who scorned your mother before you were born." And then Lady Humphrey remembered who was waiting up-stairs: and she thought about her plum-coloured satin.

"Well, Hester!" said Lady Humphrey, and gave the girl the tips of her fingers to touch. And this was all her greeting after the lapse of three years.

"I hope you have made the most of your time at Mrs. Gossamer's," she went on, while Hester was busy producing her scissors and her pins, and choking down a lump in her throat. The girl did not know what it was she had hoped for, hardly knew that she had hoped for anything at all; only now she felt the aching at heart of a disappointment.

"I expect you will take pains with this dress," said Lady Humphrey. "It costs more money than I can afford to pay for it. I think it was not very considerate of Mrs. Gossamer to trust the fitting on to an apprentice."

Hester knew her place by this time.

"If you will please to step this way to the mirror," she said, "you can watch what I do, and make your own suggestions. But I believe I know my business pretty well."

Lady Humphrey in her mirror watched the face that flitted over her shoulder, behind her back, beneath her arm, as Hester pinned, and snipped, and ripped, and stitched again; and she saw and recognised that it was a rare face, in which all the changes of expression followed one another in as perfect a harmony as do full chords of music when they are following out the method of a tune: with great sweetness and delicacy about the mouth and chin, great breadth and earnestness about the eyes and forehead, and much childlike grace in the little waving locks of warm golden hair that lay within the shelter of her bonnet. Passion and poetry, courage and simplicity, all were in that face, and Lady Humphrey knew it. And as the serious eyes criticised the fall of the satin on her shoulder, and the steady little fingers plied here and there about her waist with pin and needle, the woman felt the same antagonistic spirit rise within her against the girl that had risen once before against the child, when it had whispered, "Come out, Mary Stuart, and hear the nightingales."

Hester, having finished her work, was not asked to take off her bonnet, nor invited to any refreshment. That it was cruel treatment, Lady Humphrey knew, for the girl looked fatigued, and decidedly not robust; but Lady Humphrey's mood was to be cruel on that evening. Her son had made her angry and disappointed. She had hinted to him of things that lay next her heart, and he had turned from her in disgust. She could no longer dare to think of him as an ally. He had left her at last in anger on account of this Hester. And now here was this Hester, at her mercy. Should she give her meat and wine, and lay her to rest upon her softest bed? No, she would send her out alone, in the rain that was beginning to fall, and let her find her way back, unprotected, to London. A girl whose pure spiritual face, shining unconscious over her shoulders in a looking-glass, could make her feel gross, and cunning, and wicked, deserved no better treatment at her hands.

"How do you purpose returning to town?" asked Lady Humphrey, as the large summer raindrops came sliding down the pane. Hester was tying up her parcel, and the room was growing dark. Lady Humphrey expected terror, tears, and a prayer to be allowed to remain in shelter till morning. After all, perhaps she hoped for such a scene. It gratified her at the moment to be harsh, but it would have suited her plans to be obliged to relent.

But Hester, nothing daunted, explained. She had been turning this matter in her mind while she worked, and had hit upon a means of getting home.

"Mrs. Gossamer's laundress lives in Richmond," she said, "and to-morrow will be her morning for starting at daybreak for London. She will take me in her cart, I daresay."

"But where will you pass the night in the mean time?" said Lady Humphrey, unwillingly.

"Oh, she will let me sleep in the crib with Baby Johnny. Baby Johnny and I are great friends."

And so Hester went upon her way. "Oh dear! oh dear!" she wept as she went along; "I will never come back to Hampton Court again!"

And yet it would have suited Lady Humphrey to have taken her by the hand, kept her by her side, affected an interest in her, kissed and made friends. Within the last few hours, even, while her son Pierce had been talking to her, while she had mused alone after his departure, and again while Hester's head had gleamed over her shoulder in the looking-glass, a light had shone upon her difficulties which had shown her the necessity of withdrawing this girl from her wholesome distance and independence, to fill a gap in the plan that was daily taking shape within her brain. She had wrapped her up in that cloud no bigger than a man's hand which had risen in the western sky. She had found a place for her in the economy of the scheme that lay at her heart. She had work marked out for her to do, with her innocence, her truthfulness, her beauty, and that well-remembered fervour of her nature, which had made her hostile, but might make her useful. She had had this arranged, and yet she had lost an opportunity, increasing the difficulties of the task that lay before her; and all for the gratification of an impulse of illwill.

"I have been silly!" said Lady Humphrey; "but it is not yet too late." And she sent off a messenger to Richmond.

Hester was supping on bread and milk, with Baby Johnny in her arms. The cottage door was open, and the summer rain was falling, falling, pattering over the broad freckled faces of the laurel leaves, beating the fragrant breath out of the musk, filling the pink cups of the sweet-brier roses upon the gable, till their golden hearts were drowning in refreshment. The laundress was packing up her snowy linens and muslins in their baskets, and Baby Johnny was falling asleep with his face buried in Hester's yellow hair, when Lady Humphrey's page arrived, and looked in at the open door.

The boy brought a note. Lady Humphrey desired earnestly that Hester should return and stay the night. The morning would be wet, and a drive in the cart not pleasant. And a nice soft shawl had been sent for muffling, and an umbrella to protect her. Hester could not choose but go. She looked round the homely cottage with regret, kissed Baby Johnny, and set out.

The night was not dark, and the gardens of the palace were delicious with the genial rain. Falling, falling, it quenched the fire at the earth's heart. So had melted that little cloud

in the evening sky, that had spread and increased, and saddened the fierce glory of the sunset. Farmers in simple homesteads looked out from under the thirsty eaves and blessed Heaven for the relief of the parched fields. Was there no one to pray that that other cloud which was growing and darkening within Lady Humphrey's secret ken, might also come to earth in timely tears of refreshment and benediction?

But Hester, tripping along the wet lawns, through those whispering showers, and all the fragrant breathing of the newly awakened perfumes, felt only that some echo of her childish raptures had come back to her for the hour.

LEAVES FROM THE MAHOGANY TREE.

A GLASS OF CLARET AND A BUMPER OF BURGUNDY.

In this burning August weather, when the hot air is tingling and quivering over the dry cany stubbles, and the speckled partridges, happy in their ignorance of the rapid approach of September, are cowering down under the green parasol leaves of the turnips, it is pleasant to think of the fast coming French vintage, when the pure fresh cool perfumed juice of the Claret grape will be gushing forth in purple floods into the broad deep vats of Château Margaux and Château Lafitte — when the presses of Latour and Haut Brion will be growing crimson with the vine's blood, when the noisy blouses will be trampling down the clusters of La Rose and St. Estephe, and the reddened fingers of the laughing French girls will be toiling all day in the vineyards of Langon and St. Julien.

Gascony, the province our Black Prince once trampled over, he and his mailed horsemen, will soon rejoice in its vintage. The pure light fresh harmless Claret wine, its colour borrowed from the ruby and the amethyst, its perfume from the raspberry and the violet — the wine so delicate and fine in flavour, will come pouring from a thousand casks, scenting the air and refreshing the hearts of the honest workers.

Gascon wine may be thin, and what the port wine drinker of former days would call "sour," and it may deserve even more offensive epithets, but it is harmless; and it has this great advantage over the fuller toned and more generous Burgundy, that it is better fermented, and bears a sea voyage better: the best Burgundy being indeed scarcely transportable across the water, except in bottles, while even the lower class of the Bourdeaux wines improve by a sea voyage.

The mere common Médoc, or vin ordinaire, is not a wine of much body. Nobody will say it is. It is acid, mawkish, and unsatisfying—it takes a great deal of it to exhilarate even the liveliest Mercutio. Upset a glass of it on a clean tablecloth, as an experiment; it will leave a broad stain of a purple colour, getting paler and paler to the edge, until it ends in an almost colourless margin, not darker than the dye left by plain water. Our theory is, that that centre core of darker purple represents pure wine, and the paler selvage adulterating water, which has never thoroughly combined with the juice of the Bourdeaux grapes. One would have thought that the villanous adulterator who poisons all our food would have disdained to lay his hand on the poor meek Médoc; but, the more's the pity, he has taken Médoc under his special patronage. Dr. Gaubert, a French author on wines, says that a wholesale dealer in Paris, in the banlieue, can make a barrel of wine to pass for Bourdeaux, which he can sell at ninety-three francs—the price of the genuine wine being one hundred and fifteen francs for the same quantity. He can introduce it into Paris, duty included, for one hundred and twenty-nine francs, and adding one-seventh of water, can clear sixteen francs forty centimes by the sale. This compound is made of Bourdeaux, Sologne, Sarnnois, Narbonne, and water. M. Lebeuf, in his work, Amélioration des Vins, gives the well-known trade recipe for imitation Bourdeaux:

Ordinary red wine . . .	70 litres
Narbonne	25 ,,
Malaga	5 ,,
	100 ,,

Extract of Bourdeaux one flacon.

Cette, Bourdeaux, Marseilles, and Montpelier are famous for manufacturing wine. In the Moniteur Vinicole there are constantly advertised preparations to give bouquet and flavour to Bourdeaux, such as:

Alcoolat de Framboises, parfumé.

Extrait de Bordeaux, or Séve de Médoc, un flaçon suffi pour donner le bouquet des vins de Médoc.

Séve de Médoc (dite Saint Julien) pour donner du parfum aux vins, augmenter leur bouquet.

Teinte Bordelaise, pour colorer et conserver les vins.

For the most part, as M. Lebeuf confesses, Bourdeaux wine is a brewed, mixed, coloured, alcoholised, perfumed, and artificial product.

The vintage will soon begin on the flinty hills of Médoc; the flinty-hearted vineyard proprietors are, no doubt, already planning their adulterations. Well, it cannot be denied that the pure fresh Claret of the Gironde does get its unwholesome doctoring purposely to fit it for the British palate. We might bear with the natural infusion of waggon loads of weavils, green caterpillars, red ants, money spiders, and such inferior denizens of Gascony; but is it not hard that the heavenly juice, ripened in those little purple skins by the soft sunshine of the sun of France—that juice so cool, so pure, so fresh, so harmless—should be chemically poisoned for us by the shuffling merchants of Cette and Bourdeaux?

We groan as we confess the fact that there is no doubt that the ordinary Claret sold in England is a mixed, spurious, fired, corrupt beverage. We begin with the simplest proof. Look out Cette, the great fortified sea-port in

the department Hérault, in the best and latest Gazetteer, and what will you find?

"Cette is defended by a citadel"—and so on. Then come the damning words:

"Imports Benicarlos wine from Spain, for mixing with French wines for the English and other markets."

The gazetteer has no doubt about the fact—states it bluntly, and in as matter of course a way as if he were saying that Birmingham makes buttons, or Coventry makes ribbons.

But it is not only Benicarlos wine that is mixed with Médoc and its wealthier kinsmen, and there are some just and some unjust reasons why Claret should be adulterated for the unrefined British throttle. The cheaper Gascon white wines are mixed with the dearer high-coloured red wines of Palus. It is universally understood that the pure raspberry and violet-stained juice, when picked and trodden before fermentation, is sprinkled with brandy—four gallons and a half to a vat of several thousand gallons. This is to christen it for exportation. At a later season, the long-suffering wine is again dashed with Hermitage and alcohol, to warm and heighten it. This is called, in the Médoc districts, "working it." These admixtures, it is well known, alter the delicate quality and refinement of the clarets so tampered with, and in time change their rich pure colour into a faded brickdust, and cause them to secrete a deposit. Then come in the diabolical wine mixers again, the Obenreizers of the Bourdeaux quays. The Benicarlos wine is openly used to restore the body of nearly worn-out Médoc. Russia, Prussia, and Holland, are all spirit-drinking countries; but they do not purchase these chemical manufactures with the fanciful labels. I need scarcely say that the common white wines of Blaye, Libourne, and Réole, and the poor, thin, acid Bas Médoc, are all tumbled into the vats of spurious Château Lafitte.

We all know the form of defence that wine merchants take up. The quiet astonishment at a novice's indignation. The air of intense inherent knowledge, through glittering and supercilious spectacles, at the reassertion of old calumnies, "Exploded, sir, exploded!" But let us hammer again at the old abuses and set up the Obenreizers in the iron-clamped pillory of logically proved facts. Mr. Beckwith, who has reprinted the report on wines made by the English exhibitors at the Paris Exhibition of 1867, and who is a fervid admirer of Bourdeaux Claret, says positively that "it is notorious that there is openly sold every year at least one hundred times as much Château Lafitte and Château Margaux as is produced;" and he argues, with some justice, that it would be better if the wine merchants of Bourdeaux, like their brethren at Oporto and Cadiz, sank the individuality of their vineyards and trusted to their own good repute for honesty and integrity. M. Lebeuf, in his Amélioration des Vins, has proved that faded wine or wine injured by oidium can be restored by adding some black wine or putting a litre of Bordelaise dye to each hectolitre. One litre of Bordelaise gives as much colour as fifteen litres of Narbonne. The black wine, however, often excites fermentation, and turns the wine sharp or bitter.

Here also is another proof. Mr. Shaw, in writing upon French wines, says the quantities of first growth of the Médoc in the year 1865 and 1867, were in 1865, one thousand eight hundred and forty hogsheads, or about forty-two thousand three hundred and twenty dozen, and in 1867 one thousand and eighty hogsheads, or twenty-four thousand eight hundred and forty dozen. France alone requires quite those twenty-four thousand eight hundred and forty dozen of best claret for her own consumption. Where does all the rest come from? Horrible question.

The Médoc district, a plain on the side of the Gironde, intersected by low, gravelly, flinty hills, has always been and always will be a district specially favourable to the vine. The generous sun glows on its grey flints and its warm reddish gravel, which reflect the nourishing heat of day and retain it through the night. The endless varieties of soil (the exposure does not much matter) affect the vine, which is so sensitive and spiritual a plant that the quality of its fruit is often affected by causes never discoverable by the grower. The poor wine of Branne Mouton is only divided by a footpath from the Lafitte district, and yet it always sells for one-third less. The Vigneron François, a technical book used by vine growers, mentions that in the department of the Côte d'Or there is a small vineyard on Mont Rachet. It is divided into three sections by small footpaths. The exposure is the same, the culture the same, and the soil apparently the same, at least in the top layer, and as far as the spade or plough can go, yet the first, the Canton de l'Ainé, produces a white wine of spirit and fineness, a nutty flavour, and a powerful bouquet. The Canton Chevalier wine, the second section, is of inferior quality, and the third, the Canton Bâtard, has no quality at all. It is probable that under the unlucky vines clay or ironstone supervene, and prevent the roots growing full, fibrous, and far reaching. After all, there is no knowing exactly, as Gascons allow, why Château Lafitte should be soft and silky to the palate, and should have the scent of the violet and raspberry—why Château Margaux should perfume the mouth and yet be lighter and of not so high a flavour as the favoured Lafitte—why Latour should be fuller, yet want the softness of Lafitte—nor why Haut Brion should require so long to mature, and should superadd to the fuming bouquet of raspberry and violet the scent of burning sealing-wax.

Claret is allowed to keep well for the first seventeen years. At five years, however, it attains manhood. It contains little alcohol, but it is well fermented, and is less disposed to acidity than Burgundy. The red Claret is of more value than the white, though the white is less doctored, and requires no doses of orris root or

raspberry brandy. Many excellent descriptions of claret have never found favour in England, and are comparatively unknown to us.

An eminent French surgeon who visited England a short time ago, has publicly expressed in print his horror and abhorrence of our custom of drinking sweet champagne with mutton, and reserving fine costly Bourdeaux, at ten shillings a bottle, to sip over almonds and raisins, preserved fruits, grapes, and apples. Of course, the Bourdeaux then tastes sour and poor.

A recent distinguished and sensible writer on vinology has penned a pretty rhapsody on the contrast between the feminine claret and the masculine Burgundy. To our mind claret is the agreeable companion, Burgundy the sound friend. One pleasant author, that most delightful of all characters, a well-read medical man, says that Bourdeaux is a model of purity and freshness, and resembles young, fresh, laughing, innocent girlhood. We may admire the rosebud and the snowdrop, but there is a place in our affections for something fuller, warmer, sounder, and more voluptuous. As is Jeremy Taylor to Bunyan, Aphrodite to a Woodnymph, the Olympic Jove to the ever youthful Apollo, so is Burgundy to Claret.

During the reign of Louis the Fourteenth a great controversy raged in the Sorbonne among the black-capped doctors of the black and scarlet gowns, the bloodletters and coffin makers of the days of Molière, their relentless enemy. A wild young student fresh from his Aristotle and reckless from his Hippocrates, had rashly asserted in his inaugural thesis, influenced by some strange local prejudice or temporary derangement, that the generous red wines of Burgundy were preferable to the creamy vintage of Champagne, which this young man with much learning declared was irritating to the nerves, and productive of many dangerous disorders. The faculty of medicine at Rheims, fired by this slander, took up the defence of Champagne, and expatiated on its liquid purity, its excellent brightness, its divine flavour, its paradisiacal perfume, its durability, and all its other rare qualities. This challenge soon roused another champion. A professor at the college of Beaune at once braced on his shield, pressed down his helmet, couched his lance, and spurred his charger to the fray.

The Beaune man was very angry. His blood, half pure Burgundy, was tingling in his veins from the scalp of his bald head to the toes of his learned feet. He poured forth prose and verse, and pelted his antagonists without mercy—in fact, the celebrated Dr. Charles Coffin, the sagacious rector of the University of Beauvais, took the matter so much in snuff that he actually worked himself up to write a classical ode on the spirit, sparkle, life, and delicacy of his wine; and thus the doctor with the dismal name sipped and sang Latin verses, which may be translated, with gross incorrectness, by the parish bellman, somehow thus:

> Bubbles of joy are springing
> Up to my smiling mouth;
> The gods have sent this nectar
> To quench my ceaseless drought:
> I can't spare a drop or bubble
> To pour on the votive shrine.
> Yet I thank the gods twice over
> For sending me down this wine.

The citizens of Rheims were not ungrateful, and they rewarded the poet. Grénan wrote also an ode in praise of Burgundy, but this ode was flat and insipid, and poor Grénan got never a single stiver by it. The discussion raged hot for years, and many pipes of Champagne and Burgundy were drunk over it. It ended in 1778, when, in a thesis defended before the Faculty of Medicine of Paris, a verdict was pronounced in favour of Champagne.

Erasmus, worn with vigil and study, attributed his restoration to health, to having drunk liberally of Burgundy—a pleasant medicine, truly. In an epistle to Le Grand d'Aussy he says, with the warmheartedness of one who has well drunk: "Ought not he who first taught us the art to make this Burgundian wine—should he not rather be considered as one who has given us life, than the mere hander to us of a liquor?"

Dr. Druitt says that an eminent English wine-merchant was once dining with a wine congress at Macon. Our Englishman, with the national wish to make all things pleasant strongly upon him, propounded to the assembly in congress on the new vintages his three stale prejudices against Burgundy.

First. That Burgundy would not keep.

Second. That it would not travel.

Third. That it caused gout.

The answers were conclusive and irrefutable. They first brought him veritable Burgundy, a hundred years old, attenuated by time, but still sound at the core. They then brought him sound honest Burgundy, that had travelled round the world. Lastly, they bade him inquire of all the two hundred Burgundy growers and Burgundy drinkers round the table which of them had ever had the gout.

Lucky Englishmen of the nineteeth century! you can renounce the old Port black dose and the Sherry brandy of bygone centuries, and you can get a nice, clean, light, pleasant-flavoured Chablis at eighteen shillings, a full, round Pouilly at twenty-four shillings, and a most cheering and honest Beaujolais at four-and-twenty.

Let us draw up the bottles with the sloping shoulders, the beauties of Burgundy, the pearls of the wine merchant's seraglio—the choicest jewels of the London Docks. First comes that fine wine Beaune, which grows on either side of the high road running from Dijon to Chalon-sur-Saône, which runs through the immortalised towns of Beaune and Nuits. The dust from the wheels of the cumbrous diligences rests on those grapes like a white bloom, but they are none the worse for that. The famed Clos Vougeot is grown in an

enclosure of one hundred and twelve acres, formerly a convent garden, to the right beyond the village. Further on is Vosnes, a hamlet whose wines are rich in colour and perfect for perfume, flavour, aroma, and spirit. The Romanée-Conti is not approached even by the Romanée-St.-Vivant, the Vivant is only rivalled by Richebourg, the Richebourg only by La Tache. This amiable family of wines of the most liquid ruby, and the most delicious bouquet, combine the most ethereal lightness and delicacy with the most royal richness and fulness of body. They have all a peculiar vinous pungency.

About a league from Vosnes is the town of Nuits, with a small piece of ground only six hectares in extent, which produces the St. George, so famous for flavour, bouquet, and delicacy. Close to Aloxe is the vineyard of Beaune, a well-known and estimable wine, and not far from there grows the Volnay, with its light grateful aroma, delicate tint, and scented flavour of the raspberry. Not far off is made our old friend the Pomard, with a deeper colour and more body than Volnay, and therefore more adapted to keep in warm climates.

The white Burgundies are unjustly neglected, for it is agreed by all good judges that they maintain the highest rank among the white wines of France, and as one great authority boldly asserts "are not inferior to the red either in aroma or flavour." Mont Rachet stands highest among these for flavour and perfume. Meursalt, Chablis, Pouilly, Fussy, Goutte d'or, are also all eminent Burgundians, but they do not keep so well as the red. The white wines of the Côte d'Or have their weaknesses; while the red Burgundies of the first quality keep for twelve or fifteen years, the white mature at three or four years old, but are apt to cloud and thicken as the years roll over them.

It is a cruel pity that with such natural and changeless advantages as the Burgundy vine-growers enjoy, they neglect to make the most of them. They gather the grape clusters in the Côte d'Or in a coarse and reckless way. They tread them before they throw them into the vat. They let the wine ferment with no other preparation than removing the stalks. Finally they gather during the hottest sunshine.

Many of the Burgundy vineyards have grand traditions. The wine of Beaune, according to Petrarch, was the chief cause that kept the Popes so long at Avignon. Beaune was then thought twice as good as Romanée-Conti. Chambertin, to the south of Dijon, is a generous and illustrious wine, of fuller body and more durability than Romanée. Louis the Fourteenth is said to have taken it into his favour, and to have quaffed it in the company of Colbert and Madame Maintenon, Molière, and La Vallière. It was also the favourite draught of Napoleon; with this he cheered himself after the great cannonades of Austerlitz and Eylau; but there is a report that a bottle of rum partly consoled him for the disappointment of Waterloo.

St. George used to be held the most perfect of the Burgundies, for every aristocratic quality, ever after it was prescribed to Louis the Fourteenth, as a restorative in his illness of 1680.

Bourdeaux for the blood, Burgundy for the nerves, Dr. Druitt says. A great deal used to be said of the Vinum Theologicum, or wine grown in clerical vineyards, but no clerical vineyards have yet surpassed the best growths of Burgundy. They are perfectly adapted to our English use. They want only a moderately temperate cellar, and a warm room to drink them in. They won't mix, and therefore they rather baffle the wicked adulterators.

PAINLESS OPERATIONS.

It is little more than twenty years since the discovery was made by Dr. Wells of Hartford, America, acting on the suggestion of Sir Humphry Davy, that nitrous oxide, or laughing gas, possessed the power of producing temporary unconsciousness. Two years later the same powers were found to exist in sulphuric ether by Dr. Morton, and more recently in chloroform by Dr. Simpson of Edinburgh. It would be hard to estimate how greatly these discoveries have affected the art of operative surgery; and not that branch alone, but the whole of medical science, and how inestimable a boon they have conferred on suffering humanity. In the days when such eminent surgeons as Sir Astley Cooper and Mr. Liston were in their acme of fame, and whilst anæsthetics were unknown, the field of operative surgery was much restricted. Operations usually were avoided if they could not be performed with great rapidity, for there was danger from the restlessness and severe distress of the patient. At the present time not only is the surgeon with such anæsthetics as chloroform, sulphuric ether, &c., at his command able to reduce the worst cases of dislocation and fracture with a certain degree of ease, or to accomplish, without inflicting pain, the tedious dissection, which is to relieve a sufferer; but he can undertake with comparative safety many operations never thought of in former times. The effect of such anæsthetics upon the body when they are inhaled, is, firstly, to render it unconscious of pain; secondly, to relax the voluntary muscles, and to paralyse the nerves of sensation, by inducing a state of the brain like intoxication. Long before the important discoveries regarding the properties of nitrous oxide, made by Sir Humphry Davy, it was thought that there must exist somewhere in nature, a means of so paralysing the nerves of sensation, that some of the slight surgical operations could be performed without causing pain to the patient. Nothing, however, appears to have been established in proof of such a theory, until the experiments made by Sir Humphry Davy towards the end of the last century,

upon nitrous oxide gas, discovered by Priestley, 1774. In those experiments he fully ascertained the exhilarating property of the gas, and to some extent its power to render the body insensible to pain; for on one occasion having suffered much from the cutting of a "wisdom tooth," and "whilst the inflammation was at its greatest height," he says:—"I inhaled at intervals the gas, and found after three or four full inspirations, the pain left me, but on ceasing to inspire it, I quickly recovered my senses, and with those the acute pain of the gum, not diminished in severity by the experiment."

After this, which may be said to have been a very good proof of its temporary anæsthetic power, he does not appear to have continued his research; although he did think it probable, judging from his experience in the case of the inflamed gum, that the nitrous oxide might be used in slight surgical operations. From the laboratory of this illustrious chemist the gas found its way into every other throughout the kingdom; and for many years its property of producing a transient and very pleasant excitement was exhibited at chemical lectures. It was not, however, until the year 1844 that its power to secure a complete insensibility to pain was discovered and truly established by Dr. Wells—an able American dentist with a faculty for scientific observation—and in the following manner: In the December of 1844 he attended, in his native town, a lecture on chemistry, delivered by Mr. Colton, and, amongst other experiments, nitrous oxide gas was administered to several of the gentlemen present. The effect of the gas on different individuals was very remarkably shown; some were greatly depressed or sent off into a profound sleep, whilst others were raised to the highest pitch of excitement, and were cutting capers in a very ludicrous manner. One of the caperers became quite unmanageable, and hurt himself against the benches of the room. When this gentleman had regained his consciousness, he was asked by Dr. Wells whether the wounds in his legs did not hurt him, as the blood was flowing freely from them. He replied that he was not aware of having received any injury. As it appeared that the gentleman had been, whilst under the gas, either wholly or partially insensible to pain, Dr. Wells determined, on the morrow, to inhale the gas himself, and to have a tooth drawn by way of experiment. Next day, therefore, he procured the help of Mr. Colton, who administered the gas to him. It took little more than half a minute to bring him thoroughly under its influence. The dentist then pulled out the tooth, and Dr. Wells said, on recovering his senses, "It did not pain me more than the prick of a pin." After this discovery, many operations were performed with the aid of the gas to perfectly establish it, and with unvarying success. During the next two years, not only was it used exclusively by Dr. Wells in his practice at Hartford, but it had spread to the principal cities throughout the United States. The method of preparing the gas was by heating the nitrate of ammonia in a glass retort, great care being taken to apply the flame gradually, so as not to crack the retort, and also not to raise the temperature above five hundred degrees Fahrenheit, as otherwise the nitric oxide—a powerful poison—would be given off along with the nitrous oxide. The gas, as it came over, was passed through water containing a solution of the persulphate of iron, and was ultimately secured in a large india-rubber bag, from which, by means of a tube, the patient inhaled it.

From continual practice in the preparation and administration of the gas, many improvements were made by Dr. Wells, and in the latter part of the year 1846, he undertook a journey to Boston, to consult many of the eminent surgeons of that city, as to the advisability of trying it in surgical operations. Having had a conference with Dr. Marcy, it was agreed, that, in a surgical operation which the latter gentleman had to perform, Dr. Wells should administer the gas. The gas was accordingly administered in presence of many of the most distinguished medical gentlemen in Boston, and the result answered every expectation of the discoverer; the patient being some few minutes under operation, and for the whole time perfectly insensible to any pain. Shortly after this another operation, amputation of the thigh, was performed by Dr. Marcy, and the gas administered again by Dr. Wells. The same success attended it. As the gas gained standing in the art of surgery, so its many disadvantages, arising from the difficulty of preparing it, became apparent, and many trials were made by scientific men to discover a substance, which would answer the same purpose, and be more readily obtained. This substance, in the form of sulphuric ether, was brought forward in September, 1846, by Dr. Morton, a gentleman living in Boston, of great standing in the dental profession. The first case in which he used it, was in the extraction of a firmly rooted bicuspid tooth, the ether being placed on a handkerchief, and given to the patient to inhale. There was not much alteration in the pulse, and no relaxation of the muscles. He recovered in a minute and knew nothing of what had been done to him. The success of this operation, induced Dr. Morton to apply to Dr. Warren, connected with the Massachusetts General Hospital, in order to try the effect of ether vapour in surgery. It was given in an important operation performed by the latter gentleman very soon after, and the ether having been breathed during the whole time the patient was throughout entirely insensible; yet the recovery occupied but a few minutes.

The efficacy of sulphuric ether as an anæsthetic was afterwards established by numberless operations, which were performed without mishap from its administration. Such a boon to mankind was not long in arousing the medical world of England and France, and within a few months after the first use of sulphuric ether, at the Massachusetts General Hospital, numerous ex-

periments were tried with both that and the nitrous oxide gas; the latter was but sparingly used in England, and sulphuric ether soon stood alone, continuing to be used throughout the country, until the discovery of the anæsthetic property of chloroform, by Dr. Simpson, about a year afterwards. The qualities of chloroform soon caused it to supersede sulphuric ether, which had a very disagreeable odour, and was highly inflammable, so much so, that cases had occurred in which it had ignited, and had done much hurt to the patient inhaling it; but chloroform is not inflammable. From that time up to the present, chloroform has been used exclusively by English surgeons; but its use has not been without fatal accidents, which apparently within these last few years have increased in number. The per-centage of fatal cases is not greater than ten years ago, but where it was administered to one person then, it is now administered to many scores, and this for very trifling operations. Other serious symptoms besides the direct anæsthetic influence on the system may arise. From the frequent use of artificial teeth it occasionally happens, that these are swallowed during the inhalation of chloroform or ether. In one instance, a lady who had inhaled ether, was apparently in a dying state, respiration having ceased, and the pulse being just perceptible; this aroused the attention of the surgeon, and upon passing his fingers down the throat to admit a current of air to the larynx, he discovered an entire upper set of artificial teeth, closely forced down on the glottis. These having been withdrawn, it was only after persistence in the use of the usual remedies employed to recover a person from asphyxia (as in drowning), that the regular course of respiration and circulation was restored.

Chloroform is generally administered by means of a sponge, or flannel, upon which the liquid is poured, or else the vapour, with a certain percentage of atmospheric air, is forced into a bag, from which, by means of a tube, inhalation is carried on. We have been much indebted these last few years to the extensive researches of Dr. Richardson, the inventor of the "Anæsthetic spray producer." By this instrument a continual stream of absolute ether is directed against the part of the body under the examination of the surgeon, and the rapid evaporation of the ether from the surface completely freezes that portion, and renders it insensible to the knife. If we go back to the discovery of sulphuric ether, we find that in America, as in England, that anæsthetic quickly took the place of the nitrous oxide gas, but not to the utter exclusion of the nitrous oxide, which still was given in extremely dangerous cases, as to persons in the last stage of consumption, &c., and where the surgeon feared to risk ether.

In dentistry, too, its use had declined. But in 1863 it was again brought into active service by Dr. J. H. Smith, a dentist of Connecticut, and Mr. Cotton, the gentleman who delivered the chemical lecture at Hartford 1844, residing in New York. Its use has been perfected, and it is found to have such great advantages for short operations that Mr. Cotton, in conjunction with Dr. J. Allen, a dentist of New York, established an anæsthetic institution for the extraction of teeth, by the use of the gas, and each person operated upon entered his name in a register kept of the cases. Up to January, 1867, the number of names was seventeen thousand six hundred and one, and in no single case had the nitrous oxide produced any alarming symptoms. From Boston the practice has extended into other large cities, and is rapidly spreading all over the country. In surgery, too, nitrous oxide is again used in many American hospitals. Its condemnation in England appears to have been premature and without sufficient cause. Some of the chief dentists in London have been reviving the experiments made on its first introduction. The gas has been administered at the dental hospital by improved methods, and with great success, the patients being brought fully under its influence in about forty seconds, and about the same time being taken for recovery. The nitrous oxide gas has one great advantage, which is, that it does not produce the unpleasant after symptoms following the use of chloroform or ether; but this may be compensated by more serious disadvantages, which experiment will alone show. The difficulty of preparation will prevent its use in the army, where chloroform must continue to be used, on account of its portability and easy application; but in hospitals, where these objections are not of such serious moment—if success attend it—it may supersede the use of the valuable, but rather dangerous, anæsthetic chloroform.

THE NORTHENVILLE ELECTION.

OUR SIDE.

I HAVE seen life as an electioneering agent.

This was nearly my first case. One of the members for the town of Northenville died suddenly, and a gentleman of the Mauve party, who had long been anxious to get into parliament, offered himself to the electors. Not being able to secure on the spot the services of a good canvassing agent, he wrote to a celebrated solicitor in London, who offered me the job, and gave me my instructions. On my first interview with the gentleman who was to be my principal, I learnt what his intentions and wishes were, and next day began work.

The member who was just dead belonged to the Carmine party in politics, whereas, as I said before, the new candidate for the seat was a Mauve. The Ministry of the day were of the great Carmine party; the Mauves were decidedly unpopular in Northenville; and our adversary had much local influence.

My candidate was very rich, had a popular manner, and was a director of large iron mines not very far from Northenville. Our opponent might promise that he would endeavour to oblige voters by getting them post office clerk-

ships worth seventy pounds. But my principal had in his own gift situations worth twice that amount in the Clary Iron works.

There were many electors, and these not the poorest, who had pestered the late member with applications for government situations for their sons, brothers, cousins, and friends. Not more than a fifth of them had he been able, for very shame, to ask for, and hardly one in twenty of them had he been able to obtain. If we could only manage to persuade these gentlemen that Our Side was likely to come into office, we should thrive.

My first care was to secure as many of the public-houses as I could, and before I had been twenty-four hours in the town ten of these establishments had in their windows printed placards, on which appeared, in mauve (our colour), with letters six inches long at least, the words,

VOTE FOR MELLAM!
MR. MELLAM'S COMMITTEE ROOM.

Each publican was, in the first place, to have fifty pounds for the use of his house as a committee-room. He was to invite many to his house, and all who entered were to drink as much as possible. If any one declined to take more liquor, he was to be invited to drink at the expense of the landlord, who was instructed on all such occasions to say that he "would stand a pint," or a quart, or glasses "hot with," all round, as the case might be, just to drink Success to Mellam and the Mauves. The private bargain with the landlords was that all such liquors as were consumed were to be charged to our committee, and that the bill would be settled without any scrutiny whatever. The last clause of the bargain, but by no means the least interesting to the publicans, was the one in which I privately bet each of them (through sub-agents) one hundred pounds to one pound that Mr. Mellam would not be returned for the borough of Northenville. If he was not returned, each publican would have to pay the sum of twenty shillings; but if he was returned, I paid one hundred pounds. Fair betting is not bribery.

When the public-houses had been secured, I began to work at what may be termed the legitimate business of the election. There were two local newspapers—one strongly Mauve, the other Carmine double-dyed. Of course we favoured our own print, and not only published Mr. Mellam's address in the Northenville Mercury, but also sent in long rigmaroles as advertisements, which, although they were merely "copy" from the London papers, and of no use to our candidate, were paid for at the fullest rates chargeable for the most expensive advertisements.

Mr. Mellam's address appealed to the Mauve feelings of the FREE AND INDEPENDENT ELECTORS OF NORTHENVILLE, and commenced by declaring that it was "with a deep sense of responsibility" that Mr. Mellam submitted himself to their notice as a candidate for the honour of representing them in parliament.

From generalities the address went on to speak of the special and actual wants and desires of the borough. The Hougoumont of our position was a purely local piece of business, which fortunately for our side, the Mauve principles enabled us to support.

There was, and had been for some five hundred years, an institution in Northenville known as the Cottagers' Almshouses. These consisted of twenty small cottages, each containing two rooms and a kitchen, with a small plot of garden behind. They had been built in the old monkish days, and the founder had left a farm of more than a hundred acres, the rents of which were to support the score of poor persons who inhabited the houses. The original intention of the founder was that in these almshouses there should be maintained twenty cottagers of the neighbourhood who had become incapable of supporting themselves. They and their wives—if they were married—were to receive also a small stipend every month for food, fuel, and clothes. The trustees of the charity were the mayor and town council of the place. But the value of the estate left for the support of the poor people had increased, and the question was what to do with the surplus funds, which now amounted to some seven or eight thousand pounds. Some maintained that more poor people ought to be supported. This was the Carmine view of the question, as represented in the columns of the Northenville Independent. On the other hand, the Mauves maintained that as this great increase to the funds of a local institution had been brought about by the care of the mayor and town council, the money ought to be spent on works of public benefit for the good of the whole town of Northenville.

At the time when Mr. Mellam came forward to contest the borough, the controversy respecting the cottagers' almshouses was very warm indeed. Our friends of the Mercury were loud in praise of Mr. Mellam, and "hoped that this well-known fellow-countryman of the electors would be returned for the borough, if for no other reason in order that the wretched faction which had by means of bribery and corruption so long misrepresented the town of Northenville, might not be able to coerce their fellow-citizens by imposing additional rates, and by the perpetration of a job which would saddle the people of that important borough with a burden which they might perhaps never be able to shake off."

Before leaving London, I had ascertained who were the agents in town of the other side, and a ten pound note judiciously bestowed upon a clerk in their office (betting him also one hundred pounds to one pound that my man would not be returned), kept me alive to all that was going on in that part of the enemy's camp. I had arrived at Northenville on a Saturday night, and on Sunday morn-

ing found a letter at the post office informing me that the Honourable Captain Streatham, our opponent, would be down on Tuesday, and meet his electors the same evening. "He cannot be away long from town," wrote my informant, "for he is a guardsman, and his colonel, not liking his politics, will throw every possible hindrance in the way of his getting much leave. But I know he will be down on Tuesday, meet the electors, do a little canvassing, and make haste back to town." We also must make haste if we wished to steal a march on him to any purpose.

Since we had secured the services of ten public-houses, I so arranged that we met a certain number of the free and independent at each of those places of entertainment, thus giving each publican a fair chance of his share of custom. At the house chiefly used by small tradesmen who do not spend their evenings at home, we met as many as professed our political creed. Their club-room was so full, that we were obliged to adjourn to the bowling green, and there, standing upon an empty chest, Mr. Mellam addressed them. He said he had been asked to stand for their borough by a numerous and influential body of the electors (the deputation that went to him consisted of his own local solicitor; the saddler he employed; the rector of the parish to whom his father had given the living, and three gentlemen who were connexions of his wife's), and that he felt no small pride in being asked to represent the ancient borough of Northenville, with which his family had been connected for the last hundred years and more. To many of those who possessed a franchise it was, continued Mr. Mellam, often a somewhat difficult matter to make oneself fully understood, but by educated gentlemen (a marked emphasis on these words, which were received by a "hear, hear, hear") like those he was now speaking to, who represent the commerce ("hear, hear" again) and the wealth of the place, he was sure his words would be fully understood, and his observations, although perhaps of little value ("no, no"), would meet with that response which all who value this that and the other tint of Mauve would duly appreciate.

One very decided trump card Mr. Mellam played at my suggestion. This was the taking with him two showy London men with handles to their names. Lord Henry Leaver was known to be the brother of the Marquis of Greystake. The fact of the Marquis's brother accompanying Mr. Mellam, showed that the most noble lord was his friend, and Greystake Castle made all its purchases at Northenville; so did Sir George Strayling, who had not long ago come of age, and was about to be married and to settle down on his own property. Each of these gentlemen addressed a few words to the various publics of our public-houses. We went the round of them throughout the day, the evening, and part of the night, until we had visited all the ten whose services we had secured. At each of them resolutions were carried to the effect that Mr. Mellam was a fit and proper person to represent Northenville in the House of Commons, and that those present pledged themselves to do all in their power to secure his return.

Although the electors of Northenville are not—or were not under the old franchise—numerous, the town itself is a large one, and the population very straggling. One part of the borough is almost exclusively inhabited by a very rough, although by no means a poor, class of men, chiefly employed, either as masters or servants, in the cattle trade. These men are nearly all freeholders, although some of them own but small plots. Upon the Almshouse question they were fully expected to support the Mauve candidate. But there were others on which they were not at one with the party which Mr. Mellam represented. They were a rough lot, much given to drinking spirits, and not scrupulous how, where, or with what they struck any one who provoked them. But as they numbered some hundred and fifty votes, as they almost invariably voted the same way, and as, with all their faults, they were not to be bribed, the candidates of every contested election at Northenville made a point of conciliating them, and trying hard to talk them over. At the last election they had all voted with the Carmine party, and this made us the more anxious to see what could be done with them before "the other side" had innings. It was, therefore, agreed that they should be seen last, and in the evening, at a public-house which they frequented. In the mean time, Mr. Mellam and his friends ordered dinner to be ready at six o'clock to a minute at the Green Dragon inn, where were our head-quarters.

If anything like strong drinking with parties who have strong heads is expected, there is nothing like a dinner of beefsteaks before the meeting takes place. By my advice Mr. Mellam, with half a dozen of his finest friends, proposed to meet the cattle dealers in a friendly way after dinner. There would be no speechifying. If Mr. A. B. C. and D.—leading men among these dealers—would drop in in a quiet way, we might have a glass of grog together, and talk over matters; and if each would bring all his friends with him, so much the better would we be pleased.

For good canvassing work there is nothing like your real swell. He don't like what he has to go through, but he rides at it as he does at bullfinches in the shires, and his very pluck seems to carry him over. To see Lord Henry Leaver, Sir George Strayling, and the rest of Mr. Mellam's fine friends drink their tumblers of hot rum and water, or hot brandy (brown English) and water, and smoke their long clay pipes, any one would think they must have been brought up to it all their lives. I can take my glass when obliged to do so, but I could not match stomachs with these men, who had probably never tasted the villanous compounds more than half a dozen times in their lives. The meeting was a decided success;

and our people had the best of the game, for "the other side" had not yet put in an appearance, whereas we were well through a main part of our work.

THE OTHER SIDE.

THE candidate opposed to us was the Honourable Captain Streatham, thirty years of age, a captain in the Royal Horse Guards yellow, and a younger son of the Earl of Basement. Of course, Captain Streatham opposed Carmine politics to ours of the Mauve side. He was good looking, and had the gift of making himself all things to all men. Whether it was when talking and laughing with his brother officers in the barrack yard at Knightsbridge, telling the last naughty anecdote in the bow window at Whites, chaffing "a cad" as he tooled down the regimental drag to Epsom, or discussing soberly and solemnly the last phase of the ritualists with his very evangelical aunt the Duchess of Winterton, Captain Streatham always seemed at home, always at his ease, always on good terms with those around him. He had taken up the Carmine tint of politics, simply because his family had always sided with that colour. His father the Earl was by no means a wealthy man, and although now a member of the Cabinet, was anxious to get "the Captain" into parliament, in order that he might have a chance of some permanent Colonial Governorship, Consul Generalship, or other regulation reward of those who serve their party with undeviating fidelity for a sufficient number of years. The captain had one great fault, he was never free from debt. The Earl had cleared off all his old scores some four or five times, but he invariably returned to the slough of stamped paper. Lord Basement at last was tired of paying for the captain's follies, and resolved to get him into parliament. He paid, therefore, a large sum into the hands of a London firm of parliamentary agents. Once in parliament, three or four years' assiduous attendance and steady voting with his party, would, when joined to Lord Basement's interest, surely get him some good colonial or other appointment. He might then sell his troop in the Horse Guards, turn over a new leaf in the book of life, and perhaps end by turning out a highly meritorious government servant, and an exemplary father of a family.

This was the gentleman who had been brought to fight the battle against us. The captain's electioneering agent was a local man, and although he had the advantage of knowing everybody, he had also the disadvantage of being known to every one. In country towns everybody interests themselves in everything that everybody else does, and being fully aware of this, I soon found out that Spavit—Tom Spavit, as he was called—was poor, and that in the County Court of the district his name was as well known as that of the Registrar himself. Availing myself of this knowledge, I at once had printed a few placards and handbills, all of which bore some more or less playful allusion to the state of Mr. Spavit's funds. One of these was in the form of a catechism, drawn out in one night by Joe Sleeman, the never sober reporter of the Mercury, and paid for with a five pound note. It was the best day's work he had done since he was turned out from the London Diana's Journal, six years before, for getting drunk when he went to report a dinner at the Freemasons' Tavern. This catechism was detestably vulgar and personal. But it served our turn, and was indeed thought to be a masterpiece of wit by many of the electors of the place. Equally in good taste were the jocose paragraphs put in the Northenville Mercury, to the effect that The Honourable Captain Streatham, accompanied by that wealthy and influential local gentleman, Thomas Spavit, Esq., who was well known to be one of the leading authorities of the town on all matters of legal process, had come down to canvass Northenville, and that it was very uncertain whether the captain or his devoted friend Tommy, of King-square (the County Court was situated in King-square) would be eventually proposed for the honour of representing the the town of Northenville in parliament. By these small personalities against poor Tom (a hard working honest fellow, but much overweighted with a large family in the race for prosperity), our enemy lost several points on the game. The honourable captain when he heard of it, laughed, and said, that we had scored at least thirty-five off the balls in a game of one hundred.

"The other side" when they got to Northenville, lost no time in setting to work. For two or three days I had been very busy making things pleasant with certain electors. To one I promised a clerkship for his son in the iron works with which Mr. Mellam was connected. To the other I said that if our man was returned, the tide waitership which he wanted for his brother would be a matter of certainty. I had in fact been so busy directing the affairs of our own forces, that I had quite forgotten to watch the enemies' camp, when suddenly we heard that a ball (nominally given by Lady Vance, a sister of Captain Streatham's, who lived in the neighbourhood) would take place on such an evening, at the Crown and Sceptre, and that all the electors of the town would be asked to meet the gentleman who, as representative of the Carmine party, coveted the great honour of representing the town of Northenville in parliament.

The ball must have cost the other side a small fortune. It was admirably managed. Invitations were issued to all the electors and their wives, without exception, and special invitations sent even to many of the electioneering staff on our side, myself amongst the number.

Lady Vance, who did the honours of the entertainment, was a handsome, showy, fashionable London woman, well up in her work. In ordinary life she would as soon have ridden in Rotten-row with her face to the

horse's tail, as have bowed or spoken to any one—particularly any woman—who was the shadow of a shade below her in the scale of fashionable life. To her house in Berkeley-square never, during the London season, came any one that was not cream of the cream. But Lady Vance belonged to, and formed part of the Carmine party. She believed it to be just as much her duty to please the wives and daughters of the free and independent who might be thus induced to support her brother, as it had been the duty of the English guards to face the privations and annoyances of a winter before Sebastopol. And famously she did her duty. Lady Vance, accompanied by some of her fashionable female friends, was from Llanholme Hall, her husband's place. The entertainers seemed determined to make themselves as popular as possible with the entertained, and they succeeded. Our meeting the electors at the different public-houses, had done us harm with the women of the place. Their husbands, fathers, and brothers, were already far too much given to beer and spirits; treating them to more drink had not increased their domestic happiness. But Lady Vance's ball was quite another affair. A woman will go anywhere if it gives her a chance of dressing. And when to this is added the chance of intercourse with a lady who visited royalty itself—the temptation was great indeed. The girls, too, would have noble lords to dance with.

This was one of the moves of the enemy whom I had despised, Tom Spavit, of County Court renown. Another of his moves was the opening of the two or three public-houses in the neighbourhood of the Crown and Sceptre, so that those who came merely to look at the company were offered refreshment "by command of Lady Vance," who was the nominal giver of the ball. It was so managed as to appear the most natural thing in the world. The middle, and lower middle, classes had been asked to dance and sup in the assembly room—could there be any harm in offering a little refreshment to those of the humbler orders who came to look on? If the entertainment had been given in Sir Charles Vance's park, would not refreshment have been provided for all comers? And if so, why could it not be done in town?

But this was not all. Spavit had me again. When the ball was on foot, I noticed that Lady Vance went one by one to each of the married women in the room, particularly to all who could not, or would not, dance, and entered into conversation with them. Of course *I* did not dance: I was there to watch the enemy. With each matron her ladyship spoke to, her words seemed to have the same effect. At first there was respectful awe. To that would gradually succeed intense surprise, and, lastly, great pleasure. What can her ladyship be saying to them? I wondered. Surely she is not slipping a twenty-pound note into the hands of each Northenville matron? And yet I observed that before speaking to each of these females, Lady Vance took from Spavit a small slip of paper, which she first consulted, and then hid away in her hand. Were these bits of paper cheques? Altogether the affair puzzled me greatly. On one occasion I was talking to a Mrs. Hodgson, whose husband I had been trying in vain for two days to get a promise from in favour of Mr. Mellam. As I talked to Mrs. Hodgson, Lady Vance approached, spoke to her by name, sat down beside her, and actually began asking how her little girl, who had lately been down with the measles, was, and whether that very fine baby boy of hers had cut his double teeth? Poor Mrs. H. was in the seventh heaven. How Lady Vance—the great Lady Vance, whom Mrs. Hodgson had now and again caught a hasty vision of as her ladyship's carriage dashed through Northenville on its way to the railway station—came to know even her name; or how her ladyship came to know that she had six children, and that one had lately had the measles, was more than Mrs. Hodgson could possibly understand. But when Lady Vance, who knew perfectly well that I was the active agent on our side, and looked at me in triumph as she spoke—when her ladyship capped all by saying she had at home some medicine which was an infallible remedy for teething, that the recipe had been given her by the Queen's doctor, as being the same now used in the royal nursery; I felt that if Hodgson the absent did not vote for Lady Vance's brother, he would have a bad time of it with the partner of his joys and sorrows. And I was right. The influential tradesman, and all who went with him *did* vote on the other side, and very much they injured us thereby.

That night, after the ball, as each female citizen took the arm of her husband on her way home, the topic of conversation was the same with every couple, namely the immense delight each mother had experienced when hearing her children talked of, praised, and prescribed for by a fashionable lady, the wife of a baronet and the daughter of an earl. Lady Vance was a humbug, but she was undoubtedly a very pleasant one, and evidently knew her business as a canvasser. I had the curiosity next day to enquire, and found out that not only to Mrs. Hodgson, but to two or three other mothers of teething children, Lady Vance had sent the medicine she prescribed—probably purchased in Northenville—and not only sent it, but sent it with the neatest little note to each, the paper being headed "Llanholme Court, Northenville," and the envelope bearing a monogram which was the wonder and the admiration of the Hodgson household for many a long day. Nor was the manner of delivering these little medicine bottles a matter left to chance or the post. The biggest of Lady Vance's London footmen, was sent over—much to his disgust—in the break, and himself delivered each note and small parcel with her ladyship's kind regards.

Now, was this bribery? I say it was. Mr.

Hodgson's vote and influence were as decidedly gained over to the Streatham interest by this gift of Captain Streatham's sister as ever was City of London longshore man "influenced"—that is the legal word, I believe—by a couple of crisp "I promise to pays" of ten pounds each in value, to plump for the interests of pure religion. And yet how would it be possible to bring before a committee of the House of Commons a bribe of this kind? Would it be punishable under the new bribery act?

It was all Tom Spavit's doing. The slips of paper that I suspected to be cheques or bank-notes were merely notes upon each woman whose husband had more influence than most of his fellows. Some of these slips reached me from a pocket-book which Spavit left behind him by mistake at a public-house, and which one of the free and independent opened and examined. The notes ran thus:

Mrs. Robins.
Husband great influence with High Churchmen.
Three children.
Baby (boy) now teething.
Be very civil to her.

A second one ran thus:

Miss Henley.
Unmarried; Roman Catholic.
Brothers, manufacturers; great influence with Irish.
Can't be too civil.
Praise her religion.

A third:

Mrs. Smith.
Husband, retired shopkeeper.
Influence all over the town.
Son, grown up, in Australia.
Talk about the colonies.
Praise men who rise by their own exertions.

Tom Spavit had thus gained several points in the game, and the captain's chance of being returned to parliament was growing formidable. I went home planning and plotting what I could do to recover ground.

CONVIVIAL THIEVERY.

In one of the dirtiest of the many dirty streets in a very well-known city in the West of England, stands a public-house, long known to the police as the resort, after "business" hours, of the most desperate thieves that infest the neighbourhood. It is one of the worst of its kind, and is appropriately called The Fleece. The street in which it stands is as bad a back slum as any in Whitechapel or St. Giles's, and is approached by a labyrinth of narrow, ill-paved, ill-drained, and ill-lighted lanes and alleys. My humour being to see life in all its varieties, I made the acquaintance of a police officer of many years' standing, and learnt from him, for the first time, the existence of The Fleece. I afterwards saw announced in the window of that house of entertainment for man and beast, that a Select Convivial was held there every Monday and Saturday evening, commencing at eight o'clock. The card in the window stated, further, that "a professional gentleman" (as I afterwards discovered, a professional housebreaker) "presides at the pianoforte."

At eight o'clock on a Monday evening, I set out to attend this convivial assembly, in the disguise of a sailor. After passing through a number of dark and dirty streets, I came to one somewhat broader than those I had already traversed; and, shortly before nine, turned into the street in which The Fleece is situated. Dirty-looking people, many of them Irish, were lounging at doors and windows, and men and women, indiscriminately, were indulging in short pipes. On both sides of the road were exhibited signs, announcing that "travellers" could be accommodated with "lodgings" at twopence-halfpenny per night. Here is a sample of these announcements, and of the lodging-houses. A house containing, as far as I could judge, eight rooms, including those on the ground-floor, exhibited a sign on which tramps and all others whom it might concern were informed that it was tenanted by John McGill, who described himself as "licensed lodging-house keeper," and was licensed for eighty persons. The inscription on the signboard ran thus:

"John McGill, lisensed lodging-house keeper. Lisensed too acomadate 80 persons. N.B. Travellers acomadated with supereeour lodgings at 2½d. a nite."

Bad spelling seemed to be the order of the neighbourhood, for another sign bore the inscription:

"Saml. Stivens do live heer,
Sweeps chimbly's cleen,
& nat too deer."

I became aware of my close vicinity to The Fleece a minute or two before I got there, warned by sounds from the room of a very dingy house, a little beyond the residence of Mr. Saml. Stivens, the windows of which were open. In due course I beheld the representation of a heap of wool in the shape of a pyramid with the inscription underneath, "The Fleece." No landlord's name adorns this sign. I must not omit to mention that the street was formerly one of the most aristocratic in the city. In the front wall of one of the corner houses, an inserted tablet bore the following antique inscription: "This + is + ye + Newe Streete +."

On proceeding to the first floor of The Fleece, where the Select Convivial is held, I was closely scrutinised, and mentally criticised, by two shabby genteel individuals stationed on the stairs to notify the approach of an enemy. I entered the room, sat down, and called for a pint of beer. Gambling in various shapes and forms was going on around; there were cards, dice, dominoes, and one or two other "recreations" I had not seen before. The players were men and women of all ages, from seventeen to seventy. A gipsy-looking fellow was shouting The Bay of Biscay with all his might and main.

My entrance, therefore, did not attract so much attention as it might otherwise have done. The vocalist sat with his eyes closed and his face directed to the ceiling. At the end of each verse came the chorus, sung in all keys, but principally inharmonious keys, from the shrill treble of the young woman of eighteen to the basso profundo of the stoutest-lunged, broadest-chested man among them:

> There—ere—ere she lay
> Till—ill—ill nex' day,
> In the bay—a—ay o' Biscay, O!

Being determined to make myself as agreeable as possible, I joined lustily in the chorus of one or two well-known songs, which drew from the "president" the flattering remark that "The sailor cove can make a noise;" the "cove" thus flattered being the writer of this strictly true narrative.

"Bray-vo! bray-vo!" cried all the convivialists —excepting, of course, those who were too drunk to say or express anything—at the end of each song, with pleasure beaming from their eyes. The room in which we made festival, had been at some early period of its history the dining-room of some titled family. An earl's coronet surmounting the carved oak mantelpiece attested this. The floor, also, was of oak, but so covered with dirt, filth, and beer, that the present landlord must be as averse to the use of water for outsides as for insides. Two deal benches ran parallel all down the room, and near the fireplace (which contained a roaring fire, coal being cheap in the neighbourhood) stood an old worn-out piano, intended to accompany the convivialists in their attempts at harmony.

In different parts of the room groups of tramps of all kinds; thieves, costermongers, quack doctors; itinerant fish, potato, coal, and cheese sellers; begging-letter writers and carriers; gipsies, and many others; were sitting or standing in every conceivable posture, comfortable and uncomfortable. They were dressed in such a variety of costumes as might have supplied the lender of theatrical wardrobes with the nucleus of a stock in trade, and more "varieties" than he would have known what to do with. Some of the "professional" gentlemen present sat on the boards and tables which contained their pots of beer, porter, and other intoxicating liquids, and drank them at their leisure and pleasure. The drink most in request was that known as "half-and-half," or "fourpenny," but which *they* termed "Burton." In the course of the three hours passed in this temple of Apollo, I particularly noticed one man who drank every drop of four imperial quarts of this questionable concoction. About forty men and thirty women were present; many of the latter sitting on the knees of their admirers, and drinking from the same cups—there were no glasses—and arguing, wrangling with, and abusing, their neighbours and companions from their luxurious resting-places. Most abominable language was the mode.

One could see that the ladies were considered, or, perhaps I ought to say, considered themselves, privileged persons. This was obvious as much from the manner in which they interrupted the male singers as from the severity with which they occasionally criticised their vocal abilities. Occasionally the progress of a song was interrupted for many minutes together by one of the women making a very bad singer's cause her own, and advocating it with an immense power of "gab," to use their own expressive word. The company appeared rather shy of me at first, because I did not smoke; it did not strike me until afterwards that a sailor who neither smokes nor chews is a very rare animal indeed. Being a stranger to everybody in the room, they had, perhaps, some idea that I was not what my disguise intended to convey, but all suspicion was allayed by my "hail, fellow, well met" and "how are you, my hearty" manner, and by the readiness with which I accepted their various propositions to "put my lips to it:" the "it" being one of the quart cups. As I had determined to make myself at home, I did not refuse to "wet my whistle" at their expense. In return I found that I was expected to invite them all in turn to "wet" *their* whistles at my expense, and, as I generally told them to "drink another drop," or to "finish it," I was declared "a hout-an'-hout slap-up brick!" I was eventually called upon to contribute to the "harmony" of the evening—your regular professional thieves can make use of some very fine words occasionally—by "tipping 'em a stave," or, as one young lady with a pair of black (I mean damaged) eyes made the request, to "hollar summat." The "summat" I "hollered," was Annie Laurie. I detected a strong Scotch accent in one or two persons present, and I knew that it would be lauded to the skies by *them*, however execrably sung by me; and I knew equally well that it is one of the most popular songs current with the lower orders. It did one good to hear them all join in the chorus:

> An' for bonnie Annie Laurie
> I would lay me down an' dee.

The rattling of cups and the stamping of feet at the conclusion of the song testified to the amount of gratification it had afforded. One or two individuals were very pressing in their requests to me to sing again, but answering "Not twice, thank you," and pleading a cold, I was allowed to subside into silence. After thus entertaining the company, I found that I was entitled and expected to call upon some one else to sing or "holler summat." In pursuance of this privilege, I called upon a venerable-looking man sitting in a corner alone. The old fellow appeared so woe-begone that it would have made me happy to have prevailed upon him to take an active part in a little innocent singing. My aged friend, however, said it was not in his power to sing anything, and he was called upon to pay a fine of twopence to the "gentleman" who presided at the pianoforte.

As I had asked him to sing, I thought I could not do less than offer to pay in his stead; but the melancholy old man, poverty-stricken as he was in appearance, with a haughty tone, declined my proposition, and paid the imposition himself — perhaps with the last coin he possessed.

This affair created a pause in the proceedings, which was broken by a couple of red-haired, long-bodied, short-legged women; who, without any previous words of strife, so far as I knew, stood up and began pulling each other's hair. Some of the bystanders presently interfered and caught hold of the combatants. "We'll see fair play," cried the friends of each vixen, who now tried her utmost to accomplish what her supporters particularly urged upon her, namely, to "go in and win." After "going in" and attempting "to win," during a disgusting struggle of a quarter of an hour, the more villanous looking of the two was declared victor, and the other having fainted, was allowed to lie on the floor. It would have been madness in a stranger to have attempted to restore her to consciousness, after seeing the brutal kick bestowed upon her by the husband of her rival—an immensely powerful man—and the no less brutal indifference with which this act was viewed by the majority. I nevertheless, as if by accident, contrived to throw some cold ale on her face, and stooping down pretended to wipe it off, whereas I was, in reality, bathing her forehead. In a few minutes she revived. The wretches were so hardened that, after calling upon the waiting woman to fill their quart cups, they immediately commenced singing, laughing, and shouting as though nothing had occurred to interrupt the harmony of the evening. Carousing, quarrelling, and singing, continued until twelve o'clock, when the landlord, a bloated fellow wearing a vast amount of showy jewellery, intimated that we must all "bundle out;" and those who, from intoxication or other cause were unable to move, were "bundled" out by him and his assistants in the most unceremonious manner.

So long as there was anything to be seen in the street, I determined to remain there, and until past two o'clock I was witness of scenes of indescribable confusion and disorder. The end of it was that a gipsy was carried to the hospital in a dying state from stabs inflicted by his "butty," who was allowed to escape. "Where were the police?" A single constable appeared on the scene twice, but as no murder had then been committed, he did not deem it his duty to disperse the noisy assemblage. The first time he came, a terrible fight was going on, and I spoke to him, asking why he did not interfere, and offering to aid him in any way I could. His cool reply as he walked away was, "O let 'em fight it out!" Fighting, swearing, yelling, blasphemy, are nightly practices here; murder and manslaughter are not unknown; and night, peaceful night, especially on Mondays and Saturdays, is made hideous by a concourse of vile and awful sounds.

Towards three o'clock the scene changed. The pure cool morning air of God's heaven swept through the polluted atmosphere, and swept away the horrible effluvia and deadly malaria of bad drains, filthy slaughterhouses, and other plague-hatching spots. Not a sound was heard, and so calm and peaceful seemed the surrounding neighbourhood that I could not believe I was near the place, where, an hour before, the Devil seemed to have set up his kingdom, reigning supreme over all. I saw so much brute passion, vice, and downright brutal wickedness, in that one place, on that and several other occasions, that I am tempted to ask in this wise, what is to be done? The people are entirely out of the reach of all existing agencies of reformation, save the prison. Our teachers, our clergymen, our city missionaries, like the priest and the Levite of old, merely contemplate them or pass by on the other side. Wholesome literature is unknown to them, and if it were not, three-fourths of them can barely read or write. The condition of this wretched scum is more unsatisfactory than it was a century ago. The last twenty years have been years of great progress, but these outcasts from "society" have made no corresponding advance in their condition. They have been neither mentally nor morally improved in the slightest degree. How much longer shall these things be?

THE CAPE OF STORMS.

Eight years ago I was at Simons Bay, Cape of Good Hope, when a friend, who was, like myself, a civil engineer, received instruction to visit the lighthouse then newly erected at Cape Point. His mission was to ascertain, among other matters, how the lighthouse-keeper could best be supplied with water. I was glad of the chance to stand at the tip of Africa, a spot almost unknown to white men. Brown told me he had been there once before, and knew the road. "Oh, dear yes; I was not to 'flurry' myself about that; he knew the road perfectly well."

We had a choice, he said, of two routes. The first was the so-called "hard road" winding round the mountain which rises abruptly behind the single street of Simons Town, confining the town to a space never more than three hundred feet wide between itself and the sea. The road over this mountain had been cut with great labour, often through solid rock; but once made, it appears to have been left to make its own way in the world. The other route is doubtless the original path of the natives to the strip of land which terminates in Cape Point. It is apparently a natural ledge, running for ten miles along a nearly perpendicular precipice, whose base is in the sea, and whose summit is often hidden in the clouds. We agreed to go by this route, as being the shorter by many miles, and leave the choice of a way home to the chapter of accidents. The ledge

route from Simon's Bay was estimated at thirty-four miles, the other at forty-two, to the place where we should have to leave our horses and take to our hands and feet. This, too, was the distance on the supposition that we never lost our way for a minute, but went straight to our goal.

Although I had "turned in" betimes, it seemed that I had hardly closed my eyes before I was aroused by the nigger of the establishment, who, attired simply in his lower garment, stood at my bedside with the usual early morning cup of coffee. It was still dark, but by the time I had got my face out of the towel it was broad daylight, so rapidly does light follow upon the heels of darkness in those parts of the world. I joined my friend, and we proceeded to the stables. Brown had his own horse, and I was to trust myself to a hired animal which bore a good name in the town. My bespoken horse was, however, not forthcoming. In his stead was a rough underfed animal, who, as I stood looking at him, turned his head, eyed me for a while, and then heaved a deep sigh.

"Pompey" (the engaged horse) "he go lame in de night, massa; he not can put him fut to de groun' dis mornin', massa, and de baas say he no let gent'm'n like massa ride hoss wat lame, so de baas hab sen' massa his own hunting hoss. I'se berry, berry sorry, &c., &c."

The truth was, no doubt, that the master had let "Pompey" twice over, and preferred, as the more valuable horse, to send him on the shorter journey.

We mounted, and set off at half-past three on as glorious a morning as can cheer the heart, even in South Africa. The sun had not yet risen high enough to touch us as we rode along the ascending path by the sea, but the tops of the highest peaks shone with golden radiance against the deep blue sky. After going about two miles at a smart canter, we stopped to look round, and breathe the horses before entering upon the ten mile ledge. Below us, on our left, lay Simons Town. In front of the town, close in shore, were several ships, three of them men-of-war engaged in the suppression of the slave trade. Beyond was the vast extent of quicksands, over which all traffic has to pass going between Cape Town and Simons Bay. Every one is obliged to get over these sands as quickly as he can, for they are shifting. That which to-day is firm ground, may to-morrow be a soft jelly-like mass, shaking and rocking for many yards round at each footstep. The post-cart, a strong two-wheeled dray with a white canvas awning over it, having a pole instead of shafts, and carrying passengers as well as mails, has here six horses in pairs attached to it. They are urged to their utmost speed till the dangerous ground is passed over. We looked down also on that small island or rock in the bay, now partly taken as the foundations of a "patent slip," bearing the name of "Sober Island." It was formerly used by the captains of ships for repairing and drying sails, or other work that could not conveniently be done on board. The men and sails, with perhaps materials for rigging up a tent to guard them from the fierce midday sun, were landed on this rock, and the boat then pulled back to the ship, leaving the men in anything but their glory, for, although only two or three hundred feet from the shore, the rock was surrounded by water at all states of the tide. Thus the men upon Sober Island worked all day within talking distance of the grog shops, could see the landsman put down his penny, and get his tumbler of wine, or the more potent "Cape smoke," while not a drop of anything but luke-warm water could be got at by a Sober Islander.

Before us, and on our right, was the vast extent of waters called "False Bay;" for Simons Bay, the naval station of the west coast, is only a very small bay in a large one. Across these broader waters we could see the immense ranges of mountains, which, with the table land between them, form the southern end of the Cape Colony. The nearest height stood out boldly, a deep blue, backed up by range after range topping one another, lessening in depth of colour as they receded, till the last was of a neutral tint so delicate as scarcely to be distinguishable from a bank of fleecy clouds.

We now tightened girths, and entered upon the ledge. It began at about four feet wide, and continued for a mile or two, narrowing so gradually that the traveller does not perceive the change until at last it becomes too narrow for a horse to turn in. Then it throws off disguise, and puts the wayfarer upon his mettle. For nine weary miles had we to follow each other, up and down, along this terrible path, which now was hardly ever more than two feet wide, covered here and there with broken bits of sharp granite rock. In places it was broken away, probably by a falling boulder from above, so that for two or three feet there could not have been more than nine inches of solid foothold. Now and then a fallen bush lay right across the track. Over this the horses would go gingerly, trying each step with their fore feet before trusting their whole weight on it; for on our left was a nearly sheer precipice, and many hundreds of feet below the sea broke in thunder against the iron-bound coast, with a roar so deafening as fairly to oblige us to shout to one another any necessary warning. On the right above us was the continuation of the cliff, broken here and there into "Kloofs" or ravines, so embedded in vegetation of all sorts —such as mimosa, gladiolus, geraniums, arum, and other plants known only to botanists—that the watercourse itself was hid from view. In all cases but one these watercourses had made tunnels under our path to reach the sea, so that we often rode without knowing it, over so many "devil's bridges."

I had at starting held my reins pretty short, and attempted to keep some sort of check upon my horse, but this annoyed him so much that when we came to a more than usually ticklish place he would abruptly stop and shake his

head, as if in deprecation of my interference with his judgment. So I found it necessary to slack out the reins and leave him perfect liberty to do as it seemed good to him. That day's experience raised my estimate of the Cape horse. I was wont to look on him as a rough uncouth drudge, generally vicious, much given to buck-jumping and biting, who would take his rider any distance up to thirty miles at a shuffling canter without breaking into a walk for a minute; or pound away for an hour full gallop after a buck, and when the game had been brought down either by rifle or dogs, carry his rider, plus the dead buck, back to the place from which he started often many hours before. For such work as this, he is paid with a small sheaf of oats, roughly cut up by being drawn across a sickle blade fixed in a tree or wall—ear, corn, and straw together, and then "knee-haltered" and turned loose to get his own living as best he can. I am speaking of the up country, not of the comparatively delicate town horse. In spite of this coarse treatment, he thrives. And here I had the opportunity of seeing his inborn instinct in the traversing of such dangerous passes as this one, of which the very remembrance sends a cold shiver along my spinal marrow to this day. The careful manner in which he eyed every obstacle hanging across the path, appearing to estimate whether it left room to pass without touching; the dainty way in which he felt his ground where the path was in part hidden by grass or shrubs; and above all the deliberate pains he took to get his fore legs well planted in a firm place on the other side of a break in the path before making the gentle spring which cleared it, was equal in its way to the best efforts of reason.

In one case, as before said, a torrent had torn away the track, leaving a break in the ledge about thirty feet across, and as many deep. Here we were obliged to dismount, and leading our horses, managed in some way to scramble down and up again, clinging on to shrubs and tufts of grass. How the horses found foothold I cannot explain. On regaining the ledge we had to walk some distance before there was a spot broad enough to let us remount, and not till then did I fully appreciate the fearful nature of this pass. I have often walked along a high wall of an unfinished building only fourteen inches broad, but that is a safe lounge in comparison to this terrible track. From the wall one does not at all events look down on those huge white-crested waves dashing themselves into breakers below, and roaring to devour the traveller if once upon that nine-mile passage he make a false step, or turn faint or giddy.

The peculiar barking cry of the Cape baboon frequently hailed us as we passed along, but these animals do not care to show themselves if they can avoid it. They are, if left alone, timid and harmless creatures, but when wounded and at bay, know how to use their hands and teeth. They will even combine on emergencies against a common enemy, as in the case of the Cape tiger. This tiger is particularly fond of young baboon, but it must be very young to suit his tooth. To get it he will lie in wait for days together on the mountains, and often succeeds in snatching a youngster almost out of its mother's arms. The distracted mother with piercing shrieks then lays her case before the council of her people, who, if the tiger has not made his escape, fall on him in a body and invariably succeed in killing him. The battle field is recognised by bones and pieces of skin of both tiger and baboon; not more, for the survivors of this forlorn hope make a clean sweep of everything digestible, devouring not only their enemy, but also those of their own kindred whom the tiger has killed in the conflict. I remember being roused one night at a place some way inland, by the most unearthly shrieks, mingled with the roar of a large animal in rage and pain, the noise coming from a mountain at the back of the house. It was explained to me next morning that what I had heard was the tumult usually produced on occasions of monkey stealing, and that probably the tiger had been caught red-handed and received lynch law.

Half-way in mid air, between us and the sea, were large flights of sea gulls. There were specimens of nearly all the varieties I had hitherto seen, the exceptions being the large albatross and the Cape pigeon, both of which I have caught from shipboard, but have never seen from off land. Where these two birds build their nests and rear their young is a mystery; I never heard that the egg of either could be shown in evidence that a nest had been discovered. The utter solitude of this region, which not half-a-dozen persons pass during the year, as well as the perfect inaccessibility of all parts of the cliff except this ledge, seems to recommend it to the sea birds as their breeding place.

At length, and with a feeling of relief, I noticed that the ledge was gradually widening, and suddenly, as we rounded the sharp angle of the last rock, there was stretched before me one of those great flats of table-land peculiar to the Cape. It is a plain of sand, dotted with granite boulders of great height, and generally of one unbroken piece of stone throughout. The vegetation varies. In dry places grows the sugar bush, with its large handsome flower, which, when shaken, will deposit in your hand a table-spoonful of sweet liquid, very grateful to the parched tongue. Also the wait-a-bit bush, so called from its bearing barbed thorns, which, should they catch in dress or flesh, will detain the traveller a bit before he can get free from them. Then there is the bitter aloe, never absent from South African scenery; and, lastly, the Hottentot fig, a ground creeper, with thick fleshy leaves, triangular in section. It bears a pretty yellow flower and fresh acid fruit. This plant is supposed to possess medicinal virtues, in which I am a firm believer. Like the aloe it preserves its life throughout the year, and thrives on after every other green thing has

been scorched up by the sun, thrives on although growing in fine white sand, without a drop of moisture for nine months, or often longer. On low places, on the other hand, where the sand is still moist from last season's rain, one finds upon these plains the most gorgeous shrubs and flowers. Besides the sweet scented geranium, fuchsia, clematis, jasmine, passion flower, lilies, and hyacinths of all sizes and colours, there are many sorts of heath, ferns, and other delightful families of plants.

Another feature in the landscape is made by the immense black round-headed cones, built in the most solid manner, the outside shell being about half an inch thick, composed of a sort of watertight cement. The inhabitants are a colony of rather large black ants, who have subways supposed to extend for many hundreds of yards round, by which they approach and leave their head quarters, so that no ant is ever seen close to his hill.

We had to ride for about seven miles across this flat, before we joined the bullock-waggon track which leads to Mr. M.'s farm, and there ceases. After a short halt, in which we took a few bites at our sandwiches and heartily wished for some water to qualify our wine, we lighted up pipes to discourage thirst and started again. As for the last three hours we had been obliged to go at a walking pace, we now tried a smart gallop. After riding for about an hour, during which we must have covered twelve miles, my guide, philosopher, and friend, who had for some time been looking about him for what he could not see, pulled up, and announced that he had lost the way. His chief landmark was a bush on the top of a large rock, but the bush had been blown down, or we had overlooked it. There was nothing for it but to try back, and after a long search for "spoor" (footprints or hoof-marks of former travellers), we hit upon something which, though half obliterated by the blown sand, looked like marks of a naked foot. This track we resolved to follow, and set off again at full gallop to make up for lost time.

In an instant I found myself flying straight through the air, as though shot from a gun. In the act of coming to earth, I saw my horse apparently standing on his head, with his back towards me. Presently, and before I had time to creep out of the way, he lost balance and fell with a dull thud, broad on the flat of his back within a few inches of where I was lying. The Cape mole, a little animal about the size of our rabbit has a knack of burrowing about six inches under the top of the ground, and here and there, when meeting with a particularly rich spot he works it till it is cleared out, thus leaving a hole often three or four feet deep, with the surface soil still covering it. This, after a time, becomes sunbaked, hard and brittle, yielding easily when trodden. Over such a hole my grey had the ill luck to plant his fore feet, and breaking through the crust, plumped in nearly up to his shoulders. I picked myself up and shook myself, the horse also was soon up, but seemed rooted to the ground, and shook with terror. It was some time before, by dint of patting and coaxing, I got leave from him to mount again.

We soon convinced ourselves that by following the footsteps we were on the right track, so went on at a steady ten-mile-an-hour pace. It was about nine o'clock, and the heat was telling strongly on the riders, but more on the horses. There was not a cloud in the sky, which, round about the sun, was of a bright copper colour, gradually shaded off into the intense cobalt blue of the southern hemisphere. We were attacked by swarms of vile little creatures—not so big as our English gnat—called "sand flies," who can inflict a sharp sting on the face or any other exposed part. They seem to take peculiar pleasure in geting into the eyes and ears or up the nose, and had I been so inclined, I could, by simply opening my mouth, have caught a fair mouthful. The horses, too, had their tormentor in the shape of a large grey fly, something like a hornet, which, after drinking its fill, leaves behind a wound whence the blood trickles in a streamlet. We disturbed during the day a good deal of game, as partridge, quail, doves, and the like, and many bright plumaged songless birds peculiar to South Africa. Amongst others a stately secretary bird stalked solemnly out of our path, as if he were well aware of his legal status, and of the law which protects his feathered carcase from being made "a body" of by the penalty of twenty pounds sterling. He is snake and reptile destroyer to the colony, living, in fact, upon venomous creatures, hence, to prevent extermination, the substantial fine imposed on his destroyer. A small green-grey bird, the Cape canary, is the only one that has any pretension to a continuous song, which is much like that of our yellow cage canary, without the disagreeable high ear-piercing notes.

I was not sorry to see in the distance the reed roof of the house belonging to Mr. M.'s sheep farm, for we were there to get a draught of water, now ardently longed for by ourselves and horses; and, if the farmer were at home, should, no doubt, be asked to rest in the shade for half an hour. But on nearing the shanty—for it was little more—our only welcome was a break out of half a dozen gaunt Caffir curs or half-wild dogs, somewhat resembling the Scotch deer hound, who ran forward to meet us with their peculiar howl (the Cape dogs cannot bark), showing their rows of white teeth, and only to be kept from our legs by a liberal use of the rhinoceros-hide whip. These dogs can be safely left in charge of a house when, as in the present case, the master is absent, and woe betide the ill-starred pedestrian, especially if he be a "gent'lum of colour," who ventures to approach its vicinity. Grumbling at our ill-luck, we rode on to the pool and allowed our half-baked horses a moderate draught. A few minutes' rest and we were off again on the last stage of our journey.

Our course after leaving the farm was due south by the compass, and at last we had the pleasure of seeing the lighthouse ahead. About three quarters of a mile before reaching it, the ascending plain came to an end at the high rock on the peak of which the lighthouse is perched. Here then we had to leave the horses, knee-haltered and turned loose. This knee-haltering consists in tying the soft untanned leather strap of the halter in a scientific manner just above the knee, so that it cannot slip over, but is not tight enough to impede circulation. Length enough of strap is given to allow the horse to feed off the ground, but should he attempt to go at anything beyond a walk, the effect is either to pull the head down to the knee, or the knee up to the head. Both positions making a quick pace impossible, the owner can regain his animal without much trouble. But I have seen a cute old stager deliberately lift his knee-haltered foreleg off the ground, high enough to enable him to carry his head in the position for running, and so "make tracks" from his enraged pursuer on three legs, at a good seven miles an hour. These halters and straps always form part of the gear of the travelling horse in the Cape Colony, whether for riding or driving, as does in Australia the picket rope.

The pull up the steep rock was hot work, there being no path but such as had been made by water torrents, and furrows worn by the constructors of the lighthouse when they dragged up their materials. But this they did chiefly by hoisting the heavy iron plates from one ledge to the one above by ropes and pulleys. Owing to this difficulty and the absence of all roads, the expense of conveying these materials from Simons Bay—a distance of forty-two miles—considerably exceeded the whole cost of bringing them from the manufactory in England to the sea port, and thence by ship to the Cape.

A team of from sixteen to twenty-four oxen is required to drag, through the heavy yielding sand, a load that a couple of dray horses would easily convey along an English road.

The lighthouse keeper was out on the rock watching our toilsome ascent through a long ship's glass. A strong pull, a final breathless desperate struggle, and we stand, hot, heaving, panting, and perspiring, at the southernmost point of Africa; the actual "Cape of Storms" enchanted ground. For is it not the very home, castle-keep, of the dread Flying Dutchman? No longer a solitary storm-lashed rock "far from humanity's reach," the meddling British engineer has annexed it, and supplies it with elliptic lenses, argand lamps, plate-glass, and colza-oil.

The lighthouse is built on a small plateau at the summit of the rock, partly natural, chiefly levelled by art. There may be perhaps thirty feet of level space in front of the house, and then abruptly, plumb, without a foot of incline, the rock, many hundreds of feet deep, drops into the sea. The water for a mile or two round is studded with sunken rocks, sharp as needles, around which the sea boils and lashes itself into a white foam. Woe to the ship and men who are carried into this archipelago of reefs. None live to tell the misadventure.

Standing on this platform one may by an effort of fancy draw a line from himself due south, which forms the boundary between two of the largest oceans in the world, the Atlantic on the right, the Indian on the left. And one may dream that the two mighty powers having chosen this spot as their battle field, are here constantly engaged in struggle for supremacy, sometimes with more sometimes with less fury, but never in the calmest weather ceasing from the strife. The huge waves came rolling along the east and west sides, meeting in front where we stood (and for miles away along our imaginary line) with a concussion like a thunder clap, sending a body of water up into the air, which during a gale is carried as far as the lantern of the lighthouse, coating the glass with an incrustation of salt.

Looking immediately below, where the surge, owing to the protection of the reefs, was comparatively quiet, I saw what seemed to me to be moving masses of discoloured water, each patch several acres in extent. I could hardly believe that these coloured patches were fish. But masses of fish they were, attracted hither by the million to feed within the reefs. The Cape waters I well knew produce fish in incredible numbers and variety. I had often seen, amongst others, a hideous monster, in appearance something between a shark and a jack, weighing from twelve to twenty pounds, sold in the market at Cape Town for threepence; but till now, of the actual prodigality of marine life on these coasts I had formed no adequate idea.

Brown's mission proved rather a difficult one. There was no good water in the neighbourhood. The two alternatives were, to bring it fifteen miles in barrels about once a month—a plan that involved the labour of getting the barrels up the rock by rope slings, and pulleys; or to form tanks and collect the rain-water falling on the roof and plateau during the three wet months, for use during the remaining nine. Both methods were bad, one from its cost, the other from the uncertainties of the wet season: in one year there would be, perhaps, rain enough to fill the tanks ten times over; in the next year, perhaps, not enough to moisten the ground. I do not know how the problem has been solved.

The keeper, who was an old man-of-war's man, asked, I remember, for two boons. Firstly, he wanted a flag-staff and a code of ship's signals. When asked of what use they would be, he answered, "Well, you see, sir, if so be a wessel hugs too close in, I'd up signals and tell her to sheer furder off." But seeing that, if a ship were near enough to make out signals, she would be already close into the reefs, and perhaps be tempted into further danger by her desire to make out what the

signals were, that boon was denied at once. Secondly, the old tar wished to know whether he could annex a piece of ground and cultivate it. Being told that he was "monarch of all he surveyed," and that no one would dispute his right to till the whole promontory if it so pleased him, he replied that that being so, he should like to have a few waggon loads of soil brought up from Simons Bay, for he had "spotted" a nice piece of level rock under the lee of a big boulder close by the house, where it only wanted a foot or two of stuff to "grow 'taturs and greens stunnin'." Were an eccentric millionnaire, having taken it into his head to have a cabbage garden in St. Paul's churchyard, to buy and pull down a warehouse for its site, he would hardly compass a more costly plantation than would have been the potato ground "under the lee of the big boulder" at Cape Point, constructed according to the keeper's notions.

The descent from the rock was soon effected, and, arrived on the plain, we had not far to look for our horses. The poor brutes had given up looking for anything to eat, for the sun had scorched up every green thing to tinder. But they had found a small baboon-frequented pool, and filled themselves to the throat with brackish water.

We began our return journey at three o'clock. The heat was still intense; indeed, in January—which is, of course, midsummer at the Cape—the hottest part of the day is, I think, between two and five P.M. I had at starting declined most positively to return by the ledge route, so it was agreed to get on as fast as we could, and try to hit the beginning of the "hard road" before dark. My unfortunate grey, after covering about eight miles, became the picture of despair, his head and ears hung down, the water he carried was leaking out and ran down him in large hot drops; he had been rolling, too, while still hot, and the fine white sand had stuck, giving his coat the feel and look of a piece of sand-paper. Finally, he stumbled frightfully. I was beginning to think it would be my fate to camp out for the remainder of that day and night, when I luckily bethought me of a few remaining sandwiches. I dismounted and offered my horse one. He smelt at it and jerked his head in the air with the action of a person who has taken a long sniff at a very pungent bottle of salts. Each sandwich contained two slices of beef, enclosing a thick layer of strong colonial condiment, the principal ingredients of which I know are mustard and cayenne pepper. But his fierce hunger got the better even of this; he bolted them one after another, as a child swallows a fig with physic in it. The effect was magical; in ten minutes he seemed another animal. All the weariness—even the stumbling—vanished, and with erect head and pointed ears he galloped along neck and neck with Brown's strong handsome bay.

And so we rode past the farmhouse, where the ever watchful dogs howled at us again, without stopping until we gained the entrance to the hard road. Soon afterwards we saw the large sun sink out of the golden cloudless sky into the sea; and then, hardly a moment of twilight intervening, night was upon us, and the stars shone out in their southern brilliancy from the blue vault in which, but a few minutes before, the sun seemed to reign supreme and alone. Instantly, too, a different set of creatures filled the air; beetles and mosquitos, the huge bats and brilliant fireflies; while nighthawks and owls left the shelter of the rocks to commence their nightly search for carrion, moles, and "such small deer." Lucky it was for us we had hit upon the beginning of the road before dark, for we never should have found those faint, nearly obliterated wheel marks after sunset. Although on the hard road, we had soon to confine ourselves to a walking pace again, for there were break-neck ups and downs, besides many loose fragments of rock here and there scattered over it.

At last we stood upon the summit of the mountain backing Simons Town, and the very steep way down was before us. It is a road so steep that the few ox waggons which have to go up have often thirty beasts in pairs attached, and even then the plunging, struggling animals slip at every step over the smooth granite rock. We dismounted, and led our horses by the length of the bridle, for they will not in such positions walk beside a man, but persist in following at his heels like a dog. The lights of the town were soon seen, and we reached home as the clock of the naval yard struck ten.

THE NEW SERIAL TALE, HESTER'S HISTORY, commenced in the last number, will be continued from week to week until completed in the present volume.

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HESTER'S HISTORY.

A NEW SERIAL TALE.

CHAPTER V. HOW SHALL IT BE DONE?

AFTER Lady Humphrey had sent away her messenger, she found it very warm in her solitary drawing-room. The air seemed thick and feverish with the atmosphere of her own thoughts. She put aside the curtains from her window with her two hands, threw open the sash and looked out upon the grey twilight, creeping mistily over the dripping, silent, satisfied world. And then she began to walk slowly up and down the room, getting so dark that she could just see the path that she marked out for herself, up to a grimly beautiful little statue of Nemesis, on its pedestal in the farthest corner, and back again; there and back again. The cool rain was blowing in, and there was not a sound to disturb, but the dabbling of the drops among the little pools upon the window-sill. So Lady Humphrey, having taken her first step towards a cherished end, delivered herself up to an hour's reflection. It was not so much that she was taken possession of by thoughts, at the first, as that she set herself determinedly to think some matters out.

Her face, as it moved through the shadows, with its grey hue, its knitted brows, and hard-set mouth, might have matched with some of those other faces of bygone plotters and spoilers of the peace of the innocent, which were hanging up on high walls, only the breadth of a few chambers removed from her, fixed for ever under the gaze of all time, with the story of their secret misdeeds written in the open daylight on their brows. But there was no observant dreamer present—no Hester, with straight open eyes, to take notes, and draw comparisons; and the statue of Nemesis looked on to its own goal, and knew nothing about the matter; and the rain was busy gossipping to the window-sill; and Lady Humphrey's thoughts were as far from the subject of the musty legends and faded pictures of foolish people who were found out, as any lover of fresh air and fair dealing could desire.

Lady Humphrey's thoughts surrounded her with brilliant scenes, as sweet and peaceful, as fresh and wholesome, as ever memory undertook to furnish. Mountains lying in an atmosphere of summer light, serene and magnificent; crags covered with heather; mighty ravines with the clouds dipping into them, and the slight ash lifting its tasseled head to meet the sky, and shaking its scarlet berries against the blue. A stream, perpetually descending, swift and flashing, like a sword dividing two hills, falling into the valley with foam and thunder, slackening, flowing, smooth, silvery, musical, taking all sweet things with it to the sea; children's voices, lilies, sedges, echoes of the blessings that arise from and return upon the valley homesteads, like the pigeons that soar from and alight upon the thatches.

For there is also a bay of the sea in Lady Humphrey's picture, with a village sitting at its feet, and the brown sails of fishing craft floating to and fro in its harbour; and there is a castle, away up hillwards, half mossed over, and ivied up to its chimneys, with nestling there for so many centuries in its hollow among the mountains. In this castle there are venerable chambers, and ancient household gods. And there is plenty of life about, faces coming and going, in the light and in the shade; and there is a great peace and dignity about the place.

It is many a day since Lady Humphrey has seen this castle, and the date of her intimate acquaintance with it is thirty years back. So it is not to be expected that the faces which her memory beholds set in its atmosphere should bear the same features, or at least wear the same look, as those which at this actual moment inhabit it. The old may be expected to have passed away, and the young to have grown old. No one can know this better than Lady Humphrey, with those thirty years of life lying behind her, and yet they are the faces of thirty years ago that she sees with her mental vision. One is the face of an elderly woman, proud, keen, benevolent, and, albeit a good face, and one long since vanished from the earth, it is hateful, and lifelike, and present to Lady Humphrey at this moment. Then there are the faces of two girls: one, with pale satin-like braided hair, and severely handsome features, is surely the very image of Lady Humphrey in her youth. She looks

with envy and jealousy towards the other, who, with dreamy eyes, sensitive mouth, and aristocratic mien, stands slightly aloof, fearing a little, and pitying, and wondering, and sheltering herself by the elder woman's side. And there is a man's face too, sometimes of the group, and sometimes not of it, a genial, laughing, tawny face; and this last also has left the earth long ago; but its memory is not hateful to Lady Humphrey.

But these are not the people whom she has to deal with at this day, and with a stern shake of the head she dismisses them to the past to which they belong. They disappear, and others spring up and take their place. Lady Humphrey's eyes now rest upon a happy family group. There is a stately looking mother, with surely the same eyes and mouth as that dreamy-faced girl who has vanished; the same brow, but for wrinkles; the same hair, but for silver threads. And there is a son with a great deal of the delicate nobility of that mother in his countenance, mixed with much of the sunny geniality of the father who has passed away. And there is a girl with a bright face and a merry tongue, standing beside and between them. And all pleasant things are round them in their castle among the hills. And if into the midst of this happy group and into the heart of this peaceful home Lady Humphrey should be planning to introduce her lonely friendless Hester, who could venture to call her cruel or unkind?

How are you going to do it, Lady Humphrey? It is long since you had any intercourse with the Munros. They have no happy memories of you, nor you of them. How, then, will you establish a stranger at their fireside to listen at the key-holes of their locked closet doors, and report to you the secrets of their lives? Lady Humphrey does not see as yet how it shall be, but she knows that she will find a way to do it. And in the mean time the drops outside patter on, and Hester has not yet arrived, is still tripping gladly through the rain and the flowers, hastening to put her foot in Lady Humphrey's trap, to enlist herself unconsciously as a spy in Lady Humphrey's service. Ireland is but a name to her, and the troubles which she has heard spoken of as thickening in the island are no more to her than colourless dreams. Yet even at this moment she is running through the darkness towards Ireland; her arms are extended to it, her heart is opening to take it in, the glare of terrible scenes is reflected in her face. It has been already decreed by an unscrupulous will that she is to crush, despoil, suffer, and perhaps die there, before another year of her young life shall be spent.

How shall Lady Humphrey work her will? Is there not one in all that sunny hill-country where her youth was passed to whom she can appeal, out of the fulness of a benevolent heart, for assistance in her scheme of rescuing an innocent and industrious orphan girl from the dangers of a friendless life in London? Can she not write to Lady Helen Munro, who has reason to remember her well? Ah no; that were too dangerous a venture. Well, then, there is a brave bright face looking out from among trees somewhere, a face that Lady Humphrey can never have forgotten, in which all the world of the simple-hearted and the straight-minded put involuntary trust. Why not enlist the sympathy of Mrs. Hazeldean, the doctor's wife? That were still more impossible. Those good bright eyes are of the few things ever feared by Judith Humphrey in her youthful days.

Why, then there is the little convent on the hill. Bethink you, my lady, in your solitary chamber, after all the years of forgetfulness that have gone by, of the silver bell dropping down its homely hints about prayer to the simple people of the village, about forgiveness before the going down of the sun. There are gentle souls within those whitewashed walls, too busy with the ailments of their poor to be not easily deceived by a pretty tale of mercy. Why not write them such a letter as you can write, and have them singing praises to heaven that so noble a heart as yours has remained unspoiled in the wicked world? Ay, if the mother abbess, who was a friend to the pale-haired Judith in her girlhood, were dead, this might be done. 'Tis true she is an aged woman now, but she has not yet descended to take possession of her appointed corner in the little graveyard beside the sea. Are there not yet many others in this neighbourhood whose assistance might be sought in so creditable an enterprise? Yes; but from the questions Lady Humphrey has been putting to herself this hour past, and the answers she has been finding at the bottom of her heart, it would seem as if every door, even the lowliest in the village, must have a bar placed across it at the approach of the shadow of Judith Blake. Lady Humphrey must leave this difficulty to Time, or the future inspirations of her own ingenuity, for here is Hester's step upon the stair.

And Hester must be welcomed now, wooed, won over to have confidence and faith in her benefactress. And accordingly there is a pretty pleasant chamber prepared, gaily lighted, with the rain shut out, where chocolate, and cakes, and fruits are set forth to propitiate this child of eighteen years. And, in truth, it seems to Hester that some good fairy must have suddenly taken her destiny in hand, when she sees Lady Humphrey coming forth to meet her, with her hand extended, and a smile upon her seldom-smiling face.

"I think it will be too rainy to go to London in the morning," said Lady Humphrey, and she took off Hester's dripping bonnet, and tapped her on her wet rosy cheeks, and dared to look playfully in her wondering eyes.

"Yes, Lady Humphrey," said Hester; "at least, if you wish me to stay."

"And I do wish you to stay, you little sceptic!" said Lady Humphrey. "Why else

should I have sent for you all the way to Richmond? It was only to try you that I sent you out in the rain, all alone."

"To try me?" repeated Hester.

"To try what you were made of," said Lady Humphrey, provoked at the girl's quiet amazement. She had counted upon more effusion, more gratitude and delight, from the fervent little Hester of other days. She forgot how the fervour had been crushed by her own will, that the other days were gone, and that important years had passed over Hester's head, of the experiences of which she knew nothing.

"Only to try what you were made of," said Lady Humphrey. "To find out whether you had a spirit of your own, were proud and independent as I should wish to see you. Your behaviour has been perfect, and I am now quite content."

Hester's wet garments were clinging to her, but her thoughts did not reproach Lady Humphrey for having put her to an uncomfortable test. She only said mechanically, still lost in her wonder:

"I am glad you are content, Lady Humphrey."

"And I am glad that you are glad," said the lady. "You and I must become better friends. I intend that you shall be my visitor here for some time. You shall do as you please, and we will send away all this satin to Mrs. Gossamer to be finished by other hands. I will take you to the theatre, and we will buy some pretty gowns. And now," finished Lady Humphrey, not being able to think of any other tempting bait which she could hold out upon the moment, "now I think you had better eat your supper, and go to bed. And we will talk of a great many other things in the morning."

Hester did as she was bidden, not, however, without some rueful regrets about Baby Johnny and a drive to London. The memory of her chill reception still clung round her, as pertinaciously as the wet cloak round her shoulders. She was too much taken by surprise to be ready to make an effort to forget it. She would forget it in time, if permitted to do so, but this kindness of Lady Humphrey was so new and curious, and Lady Humphrey's appearance agreed with it so badly, that Hester's poor wits were astray with trying to comprehend the sudden change.

"I wonder what she wants with me," was Hester's first thought, after the shock of the surprise was over. It never struck her that such a reflection was ungracious. That Lady Humphrey, after all these lonely years of neglect, had drawn her to her side again from an impulse of compassion or tenderness, was a belief that must be slow to enter Hester's mind. She had been well grounded by the lady herself in the conviction that she was a creature to be put away out of sight, or drawn forth and made use of, according to the emergency of the moment. Picked up and put down, called out and sent back again, it was thus that Lady Humphrey's will had been wrought on her; and surely Lady Humphrey was Lady Humphrey still.

So Hester sat on the corner of her pretty bed, and had her wonders all to herself. Once more, suddenly, she found herself surrounded with the bright dainty things she had so loved long ago. Here were the same silken hangings; the pictures; the chair with the little low seat, and the tall carved back. She went round the room on tiptoe, touching her old friends, and making sure she was awake. "But how long will it last?" said Hester, sighing; "how long will it last? And I had rather," she soliloquised further, shaking her fair head at the flame of her candle, "I had rather far go back at once with that satin to the workroom than sit waiting here for her anger or her coldness to return. And I will never be her dependant, so long as my fingers can hold a needle."

These were Hester's first impulses of feeling about this change: dread and distrust. Farther on towards morning, however, when the rain had ceased, and Lady Humphrey was asleep, other thoughts grew out of the night and took their place. Rest and comfort did their work, and brought gratitude and peace. And Hester fell asleep thanking God that Lady Humphrey was Lady Humphrey no longer.

Every day after this was a surprise to Hester: a pleasure, a trouble, a confusion. Most strange it was to see how Lady Humphrey's goodhumour lasted; most strange to feel the effort it cost her to be kind; almost fearful the determination with which the difficulty was conquered. The frown would loom out, but the smile was always ready to shine it down. The voice, involuntarily harsh, would smooth itself. The hand was ever generously open. But the bounty crushed Hester, and the caresses made her fear.

Yet what was there she could fear from Lady Humphrey? Nothing worse than to be sent back to Mrs. Gossamer and the workroom. A needle in her fingers gave her courage. And in the meanwhile it was pleasant to play the lady for a time, with the long day all leisure, and the gardens and the pictures close at hand.

So Lady Humphrey was pleased with her own success.

CHAPTER VI. HOW HESTER WAS TAKEN TO A BALL.

It seemed that fate took that puzzle of Lady Humphrey's in hand; with a few simple shakes and touches made the pieces fit together, and dropped it in all simplicity into the lady's lap.

When Pierce Humphrey came out, and found Hester at Hampton Court, he was pleased, astonished, confounded, at the recollection of his own ill temper. And it pleased his mother now that he, Pierce, should be attentive to and

gentle with little Hester; that he should present her with a rose, write her a valentine, play chess with her the length of an evening (his heart being safe all the time with his Janet at Glenluce). But it would be no harm at all if simple Hester should remember him at parting with kindness. Any tie that could help to bind the girl to herself, however indirectly, must be forged at any cost, without delay.

It would be nothing to Lady Humphrey if Hester should go to Ireland with a pain at her heart. And Pierce was (as his mother knew well) a young man who could take a fancy to any good thing that came across his way, and pass on with a little look backward and a sigh of sentiment, and love the next sweet thing just as freely as the first. And the next after that again had quite as good a chance as the rest, and it must hang upon little things as trifling as the accidental (or artful) holding out of a hand, the chance passing by a door, whether the first or the last should know the permanent enjoyment of the tender hospitality of that softest amongst the hearts of mankind. So Pierce, with a fiancée in Ireland, whose sudden desertion had cost him throes of unexampled anguish, devoted himself most easily and naturally to Hester, his little nurse of other days—the seamstress and dressmaker—the young lady on a visit with his mother at Hampton Court.

And Hester? Well, even as a child, she had found herself disappointed in him, and in the truth of her nature had not refrained from avowing it. Neither did she approve of him now. But she was driven to him often for companionship and sympathy, and this last she found plentiful at least, if not deep of its kind. She liked him, admired him, in as far as there was anything to admire; her heart warmed to him as the only one who had ever as yet come near her bringing love. She would have soothed him in a trouble as she would have soothed Baby Johnny, got a habit of relying on his good nature and affection as the only present thing she had to trust. That it was a weak thing to cling to she felt. But that feeling was a sadness in itself.

He would take her out and row her among the lilies up the river; Lady Humphrey having commanded her to go. He would tease her with the swans, read her a tender sonnet, stick water-lilies in her hair, tell her that a fellow could not choose but worship such a face as hers. And he would take her wise rebuke with meekness, sighing over it till she was obliged to be kind again for pity. And Hester had no other friend, and was afraid of Lady Humphrey. And that lady looked on in silence at the delicacy and reserve, the simple dignity of the girl's untutored conduct, and congratulated herself that, in the stealthy work of harm that was before her, she had found so fine a weapon at her hand.

Thus a brilliant uneasy phase of Hester's life went past; busy with pleasure, but straitened by doubts; very brightly coloured, but with colours somewhat gaudy and coarse, and utterly unwarranted to wear. There were poetry books and pictures, and visits to the theatre. There were smart bonnets and fair gowns, and excursions to Vauxhall. There were occasional frowns, and even taunts, when Lady Humphrey's temper was not proof against the anxiety of her mind. But then there was always soft-hearted, easy-going Pierce, with his refuge of goodnature and his shield of protection.

One day a little old snuffy-looking gentleman arrived and was shown up to Lady Humphrey's drawing-room. It was early in the day, but Mr. Campion was never denied by Lady Humphrey, no matter at what hour he might appear. The lady was yawning over her morning papers, nothing of special interest having caught her eye. Hester, at a window, was busy with some sewing, turning a half-worn gown for Lady Humphrey's morning wear. For even in these fleeting days of her young-ladyhood, it was found useful that Hester's needle should get exercise. Mr. Campion was announced, and the gentleman appeared. He advanced with a dancing-master's gliding step, and wore a full dress of black, with some snuff upon the collar of his coat. His face gleamed as yellow as a guinea from under the whiteness of his powdered wig. His lively deep-set eyes took a few turns round the room, and fixed themselves on the floor, a few rapid turns round the room again, and fixed themselves on the wall; but seldom did they so favour the person who might be addressing him. His face was all dragged into wrinkles, more, it would seem, from his habit of twisting it about into a hundred changing expressions, than from age.

Hester looked up from her sewing and remembered something dimly. Had she seen this little smirking man before? Probably she had, over the card-tables so long ago, when the winter nights were long, and the visits to Hampton Court were so many fresh chapters of an unfinished fairy tale. For Mr. Campion was Lady Humphrey's man of business, and it was many years since he had first enjoyed the dearly earned boon of her social condescension. This visit was one of business, and Hester was dismissed from the room.

"Well?" said Lady Humphrey simply, when the door was closed and they were alone.

"Your ladyship is before me with the news of the day I perceive," said the little man, in a tone and with a look half bantering and half cringing, while all the time he was stroking and fingering two folded newspapers which he held caressingly on his knee, as if they had rather been some kind of living things which had behaved so very well that they deserved to get a petting.

"I am waiting your pleasure to inform me," said Lady Humphrey, hiding her impatience under a cold reserve, sinking backward in her chair, an image of indifference.

"Pardon my little jest," said Mr. Campion,

humble in manner, yet with a hidden triumph in his creaking voice. "I but dallied with the time till retreating footsteps should have leisure to descend your ladyship's staircase."

"I see no jest," said Lady Humphrey, curtly; "and we have no eavesdroppers here. Pray be good enough to proceed."

"Pardon again!" said the little man. "I delay no longer. It is true there is a matter which I am come to speak of. Our young friend is in London at this moment."

"In London!" echoed the lady. "And what of that? Why is he in London?"

"For an excellent purpose, your ladyship. Neither you nor I could have a motive more innocent or more laudable. Sir Archie Munro comes to London—to meet a friend."

Lady Humphrey made an impatient gesture. "And the friend?" she questioned.

"Comes from Paris. And is not so much a friend of Sir Archie as of Ireland. A banished patriot, a sufferer in the great cause, who ventures to England in disguise, to carry information to his fellow-rebels, and to seek it."

"And Sir Archie meets him to receive such information, and to give it?" said Lady Humphrey, fully aroused now. "This is more than we had reason to hope for."

"We suppose it to be so, Lady Humphrey—we suppose it to be so," said the little man, growing mysterious and abstracted as her ladyship's interest got enkindled.

"It is all that we require, is it not?" said Lady Humphrey, her voice beginning to quaver with the passion of her eagerness.

"If things turn out well, why—yes," said Mr. Campion. "But 'there's many a slip,' you know, my lady. If this information of mine be worth anything, we must witness the interview."

"Will that be possible?" asked Lady Humphrey. "Have you people who can manage such a difficulty?"

"We will look to it ourselves, Lady Humphrey. We will do our own work, and it will be done all the better."

"Go on," said the lady.

"Lady Humphrey has doubtless intended to grace with her presence the fancy ball at Almack's, which is to be held on the twentieth of this month."

"This is the fourteenth," said Lady Humphrey. "Go on."

"Sir Archie Munro will wear a blue domino," said Mr. Campion, with his eyes upon the ceiling; "and the friend from over the water will wear a black one, with a mask. I am not yet sure who the latter may be. Two or three names have been mentioned. It may prove to be the arch conspirator himself, Wolfe Tone. It will be enough for Sir Archie Munro to be taken in his company. An acquaintance of mine, whom it will not be necessary for me to introduce to your ladyship, must attach himself to our party. And neither of our gallant compatriots need return to his own lodging that night."

"A strange place to be chosen for their conference," said Lady Humphrey.

"A good place, and cleverly thought of," said the little man, beginning to twinkle his eyes about again and to chuckle. "There is not a lonely garret in all London so safe for telling secrets as the centre of such a mad conceited crowd. But we will dog their steps, my Lady Humphrey, and we will trip them up. Not a vain belle nor silly coxcomb in the place shall be led such a dance as we will lead them. Aha! we will trip them up!"

Lady Humphrey sat silent and reflecting. "In that case," she said, "if this thing goes well, we shall not require any one in Ireland on the spot." And she thought within herself that Hester might go back to Mrs. Gossamer's at any time.

"If this thing goes well," said Mr. Campion, "all that we can do will be necessarily finished off at once. We shall be rewarded for our services to the value of our services at present. But your ladyship must remember that the goodly consequences of our loyal endeavours must be much less important now than they are sure to be some six months hence. The evil in Ireland is growing apace. Next spring, next summer, will see the active operations of a civil war. Nothing easier than a transfer of property then, Lady Humphrey. Not a few paltry thousands for your trouble, but a wholesale transfer—money, lands, goods, and chattels. Nothing to be done but make a bonfire of the escutcheon of the Munros."

"'A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush'—Mr. Campion is fond of proverbs, I observe," said Lady Humphrey, after a grim pause.

"True, true!" said Mr. Campion, rubbing his hands with glee. "And if we can settle Sir Archie's affairs for him now, how silly to run the risk of delay! Excuse me, my lady, but, had circumstances permitted it, what a splendid man of business your ladyship would have been!"

"Pshaw!" said Lady Humphrey, with abrupt displeasure. And she sat silent and reflecting again, thinking within herself that Hester had better not go back to Mrs. Gossamer's as yet.

"And those papers in your hand?" said Lady Humphrey, by-and-by.

"Irish publications," said Mr. Campion, "containing little noteworthy tit-bits of gossip and news. Your ladyship will be amused and encouraged. The wretched old hulk of a country is going to pieces, as we have seen, without fail. And we, my Lady Humphrey, you and I, and mayhap other sensible people, are like the wreckers from the coasts, who dare the breakers to help to put the monster out of pain. Our boat has pushed off about the first, ha! ha! and the spoils promise well; but just now and then we get a hint to refrain from laying hands upon the share we have

worked for, till we know that some desperate holes have actually been battered in the ship's sides. Ha! ha!"

The little man laughed at his own wit, with a strange hiding and peeping out again of his twinkling eyes, and a great dragging and knotting up of his wrinkled visage. And he wrung his hands together tightly, and polished them with each other till all the joints grew bright and shone again. And Lady Humphrey fixed her silent gaze, with a ferocious contempt, on the contortions of his delight, and her hands twitched the folded papers he had put into them. Perhaps, if those papers had been bullets, she might have taken a fancy to send them spinning through the shaking head. But that would have been a pity, for Mr. Campion was a most useful little man.

"I do not relish jests on this subject," she said, after a few moments' wrestling with perverse inclinations. "What is there in these sheets worth looking at?"

"I beg your ladyship's pardon, I am sure," said Mr. Campion, with a bow of mock courtesy and a grimace. "We will begin with a curious little record in the News Letter of Belfast. It is short: it will not weary your ladyship with words:

"'Mr. William Orr, of near Antrim (now in Carrickfergus Jail), has had his entire harvest cut down by near six hundred of his neighbours in a few hours.'

"And here in the Northern Star is a corresponding announcement:

"'About one thousand five hundred people assembled, and in seven minutes dug a field of potatoes belonging to Mr. Samuel Nelson of Belfast, now in Kilmainham Jail.'"

"What do these morsels signify?" asked Lady Humphrey. "What do they tell you?"

"Tell me!" cried Mr. Campion, in triumph. "They tell me that the jails are gaping for men who are beloved by the people. They tell me that if we choose to be expeditious we may have some thousands of fools cutting down Sir Archie Munro's goodly harvest in some ten or fifteen minutes, if we but choose to hold up our finger. But they warn me also that these Irishmen are furious in their passion for their chiefs, that jails are slippery strongholds, with doors through which people can come out as well as go in, and that their keys have a trick of changing hands in time of civil war. They also hint to me," continued the little man, "that by-and-by our dealings with our dear sister island will be more prompt and less ceremonious than they have been, that the formality of jails will be dispensed with, that other harvests will be reaped in those same fields where the grain is now falling so quickly; that those very ready reapers who are over-busy with their sickles will be apt to be mown down in their turn, laid low among their furrows, by as speedy an application of his majesty's bullets as such nimble-handed bumpkins could desire."

"I see nothing in all this that I did not know before," said Lady Humphrey, folding up the paper and dismissing the subject. "I have thought it all out long ago. I know how the fools will behave and what they will come to. We had better spend our time in making arrangements for this fancy ball, I conceive."

And some further consultation having been held upon this subject, Mr. Campion at last made his farewell grimace, and slid out of the room as he had slid into it.

So Hester was informed that she was to be taken to a fancy ball. It was to find her a novelty, to show her a pretty picture, that Lady Humphrey had planned such a treat. She was as pleasantly excited about the matter as even Lady Humphrey could desire her to be. And "I think I can undertake them," she answered, with animation, when called upon to exert her ingenuity on the contriving and making up of two costumes for the occasion. Whereupon Lady Humphrey wrote off some little notes to a very select few of her most intimate and frivolous friends; and she got some other little notes in return. And a party was made up for the ball. Five individuals, including Lady Humphrey and Mr. Campion, were to make their appearance in the assembly as—a hand of cards. Hester was to be Red Riding-hood, and Lady Humphrey the queen of Spades.

Some black velvet, some satin, some white muslin, some red cloth, were all furnished to Hester without delay; and the costumes were in readiness when the evening arrived. Lady Humphrey's sweeping train of black velvet, ornamented with white satin spades, was pronounced a marvel of elegance and conceit by the party. Her fellow cards of the hand all dined at the palace with Lady Humphrey. There was also a Spanish cavaliero who made his appearance at the dinner-table, and who praised the English cooking very much, but who proved to be Mr. Pierce on minute investigation. Hester had also an honoured place at the board, and with her gold hair all showered over her shoulders under her little red hood, made a picture such as seldom can be seen. Mr. Campion surveyed her with attention, and rubbed his knuckles up to the highest degree of polish that it is possible for skin and bone to assume.

"Our fair instrument?" whispered he to Lady Humphrey, with his eyebrows going up into his wig. "Then——

"Little Red Ridinghood!" sighed Mr. Campion, sentimentally, sweeping Hester's face with his eyes, and then fixing them on the moulding of the ceiling. "How this carries one back to the days of one's childhood! A very charming impersonation indeed! But there ought to be a wolf in attendance, ought there not?" he added, suddenly addressing the company. "The wolf who put on the grandmother's nightcap, you remember, Lady Humphrey."

But Mr. Campion's little witticisms were

always lost on Lady Humphrey. Yet in spite of her discouragement, the little man kept up a high flow of spirits; and the company went laughing and jesting into London.

AUSTRALIAN MUTTON.

Three legs for a shilling, half a sheep for two-and-sixpence. These were the prices of mutton in the Ballaarat Market in the middle of the month of June in this present year, 1868.

Ballaarat, on a Saturday night, is worth seeing. Some thousands of prosperous looking miners and other workmen; hundreds of clerks or storemen and their wives; young lads and lasses, all well dressed, and seldom with a drunken man among them; these look for their provender among rows of fat sheep, magnificent joints of beef, poultry, and rabbits, and, in the season, the various sorts of wild ducks in abundance; a brace of teal for eighteenpence, and, for those who like it, the black swan for half-a-crown.

Three legs for a shilling! Suppose we jump into a buggy and trot along a well kept macadamised road for about ten miles out of this city of gold. Here are hundreds of glossy black-coated crows, at first sight just like their English cousins; but the eyes are white—a condition of the iris not uncommon in Australian birds. Rows after rows of sheepskins hang on fences, near a number of low wooden buildings, and a steam waste-pipe: from which the pretty white vapour is rising into the clear blue cloudless sky—this is a boiling-down establishment. Here are sheep pens filled with fine wooled merinos: the ewes weighing from forty to fifty pounds: the wethers, say some ten pounds more. Nearly all Australian sheep are merinos. Their coats are at present worth about three shillings each, and, when woven by English looms into wondrous fabrics, they may help to dress a duchess. Their carcases, worth about as much, are doomed to go to pot. A couple of men enter the pen and knock a few hundred sheep on the head. They are then immediately seized and dragged into the butchery—which place we also enter, trying at first to pick our way on the gory floor—but soon content to stand anywhere in the blood, which is everywhere. The head of each stunned animal is laid over a brick drain to carry away the blood; a butcher with a keen knife lifts each head up and cuts the throat; another follows and cuts out the tongues; the bodies are then thrown in heaps ready for skinning. The skinner's duty is to skin the beast, disembowel it, and cut off its head. For this he is paid twelve shillings and sixpence a hundred, and will do his hundred and ten a day. The carcases skinned and cleaned, are carried into a cutting-up room, where they are quickly cut into quarters; the fore quarters piled up in one place, the hinds tossed into hampers are then taken into another room where the tails and outside fat are cut from them. When trimmed, they are sent to market and sold according to size for ninepence, sixpence, or fourpence, or are salted and smoked for eighteenpence. Following the process of trade with the rest of the sheep, we come to the boiling-down room; there we find three iron cylinders about eight feet long by three in diameter; into these the fore-parts with the fat trimmed from the hind is put; each cylinder can hold three hundred sheep, so we have cooking apparatus for nine hundred.

Each boiler is furnished with perforated false bottoms. When the sheep are packed in, the tops are securely screwed down, steam is forced in at a pressure of from forty to forty-five pounds to the inch, and they are left to cook. In about seven hours they are done. The fat and oil, *i.e.* the tallow, is run off by means of a stop-cock near the top. A fat ewe of forty pounds' weight will give about twelve pounds of tallow, so that from the three boilers we should get about ten thousand eight hundred pounds of tallow. This is run into casks holding about eight hundredweight each. A stop-cock is also opened near the bottom from which the gravy runs out, smelling deliciously, and one would think making good soup. But it all runs to waste, emptying itself into a swamp. From an iron door at the bottom, the meat and bones are taken; this refuse is pressed, to squeeze out the remaining fat, and is then shovelled out for manure and sold at five shillings a load. So completely is the stuff cooked, that I can crush up the bones in my fingers.

We have yet to follow the heads. These are skinned, boiled, and then given to the pigs, of which there are three hundred. Nothing is done with the blood. Our farmers are not yet enlightened enough to use it, though it may be had for the carting away.

The sheep then is thus disposed of: you English get the wool and tallow; we Ballaaratians get the legs and tongue; the pigs get the head; the ground gets the refuse, to come to use again, it may be, in golden drop wheat, and which possibly may go to feed your English mouths.

In an adjoining building, Swiss coopers are at work making casks from the silver wattle of Tasmania.

But though this is what we are doing with thousands of our sheep, every week, we do not want to do it. We had far rather it should feed our brothers in the grand old fatherland. You want mutton and beef. We want to send it to you. How can this be done? Meat may be preserved, and in many ways. It may be done up in tins. For this, there are several processes, the most common of which is boiling the meat, and at the right moment, when all the air is excluded, hermetically sealing the top of the tin. Or the meat may be tinned fresh, in joints, and certain preserving gases introduced. Some meats thus preserved were placed on board her majesty's ship Galatea, and his royal highness her captain reported very favourably of them. But meat sold in tins is not

popular; folk like to see what they are eating; and the revelations which came to light some years ago have not helped their consumption, though none need be afraid of what is sent from Australia, for good joints are the cheapest things we can put in. Necessity secures our honesty. Then there is Baron Liebeg's extract; but most people would rather have a cut at a juicy beefsteak than drink a spoonful of extract. We are, however, making extract, and doubtless a limited market will be found for it. Mutton and beef may be salted. This we are doing. Beef hams, mutton hams, rolls of beef, sides of mutton salted and spiced, are to be packed in iron tanks, into which tallow is to be poured, to keep the meat from getting hard and dry, and you in English markets are to buy spiced and smoked meats, hitherto sold at Italian shops for two shillings a pound, for sixpence. But this, appetising as it is, and splendid for breakfasts and lunches, will, we fear, not satisfy the paterfamilias of middle life as his cut-and-come-again dinner joints. We in Australia want, and you in England want, that the aforesaid pater should be able to go and look out a leg of merino mutton—fed on our plains, and which, perhaps, grew the most perfect wool in the world—or a sirloin of beef fattened on salt bush, and, being able to pinch it with his fingers, and see that it is all right, order it to be sent home, to feed his rough school lads or his sweet English maids.

At the head of a pretty little valley, called La Croza, near Sydney, New South Wales, stands Mr. Mort's refrigerating establishment. To this refrigerating or freezing process we look as a possible means of giving you our fresh meat. Frozen meat is not a new thing, but the difficulty is to freeze and keep it frozen for a three months' voyage, and that through the tropics. Mr. Mort has patented a process, discovered by a Mr. Nicolles, by which it is believed this may be done.

The inventor, in his application to the Supreme Court for a patent, says, "The invention is an application of Professor Faraday's discovery of the liquefaction of certain gases by pressure, and capacity of such gases for absorption of heat in their return from liquefaction." The apparatus erected at La Croza, and intended to be used on board ship, is describable somewhat as follows:

The material used is, the common liquid ammonia of commerce; this being greatly rectified is put into cylinders called separators, the quantity of absolute ammonia in such vessels being indicated by glass gauges. From a small steam boiler, steam is led by a coil which passes into a separator: the object of using the steam, being to heat the ammoniacal solution in the separator, and so to cause the ammonia to be volatilised, or in other words resolved into gas. So gasified, the ammonia is drawn off from the boiler, and conveyed by a series of pipes through a number of coils into a bath or tank of water (which may be on the deck of the ship). The object is to condense the aqueous vapour by which the ammonia is accompanied. The gas thus dried is then forced by steam into an iron cylinder immersed in a bath (also on deck), and there by pressure on itself, being a non-permanent gas, it becomes liquefied. This last vessel is called the liquid gas receiver. From this receiver, the gas in a liquid state is passed by pipes into the outer compartment of the meat receiver, an immense double cylinder as capacious as may be required. This meat receiver is made with double casing, its walls perfectly tight, to contain the liquefied gas, supplied from the liquefied gas receiver. The whole vessel is surrounded by some good non-conducting substance, as charcoal, felt, or gutta-percha; and that is enclosed again in a wooden covering, varnished or painted, so as to exclude all moisture. The inner cylinder rests on the bottom of the outer, leaving a space at the top of about two inches. At the ends are holes large enough to give ingress and egress to men for stowing, unloading, &c. These openings are fitted with wooden coverings fitted round with gutta-percha.

Having thus tried to give an idea of the apparatus, let us endeavour to describe the manner of using it. The gas having been drawn out of the separators, the heated water is forced through two coolers, and from the coolers passes on by a pipe into an iron cylinder called the reabsorber, which is immersed in a water tank. The separator being emptied is again supplied with ammoniacal solution, and the process is repeated; the reabsorber now containing but a very weak solution, is prepared to receive the gas coming to it from the compartment round the meat receiver. Let it be remembered that ammoniacal gas has so great an affinity for water, that water at sixty degrees Fahrenheit will take up six hundred and seventy times its volume of gas. The consequence of this is that when, by opening a stop cock, admission for the gas into the water is obtainable, it rushes in with great violence, passing from its state of liquefaction into a gaseous form, and carrying with it all the caloric or heat contained in the meat it has been surrounding.

It is in this transition, when the liquid expands into a gaseous state, that the freezing or complete refrigeration takes place. Through special details in the apparatus, there is no loss whatever of the chemical substance employed. The compartment round the meat is filled with the icy current from time to time, until all the meat, &c., placed within is frozen to the required degree of intensity. The ammoniacal gas is capable of freezing to one hundred degrees below zero. One hundred tons of meat can be frozen in twelve hours by the apparatus now erected, which, as at present constructed, would take up about thirty tons measurement on board ship. The meat frozen thus for months, when allowed to thaw, is found to have lost none of its flavour, and will keep as long as meat newly killed. Meat and fish kept for six months have been used at the clubs and government houses, and have been pronounced

excellent. The inside of the immense cylinder at La Croza is a dark cavern, covered by a coating of snow an inch or two thick. It is an ice-house of the chemist's fashioning, completely under man's control; Jack Frost's own larder, with the cold of arctic winters in its air. Quarters of lamb, ribs of beef, geese, fowls, rabbits, fish, are hanging up in it, hard and fresh. Some of them have been there for six months.

It is hoped that by this means our Murray mutton and Saltbush beef may help to sustain the English workman, and make abundant meals for the destitute. Ships will require to be specially fitted; but, with all these charges allowed for, it is believed that meat may be carried home and sold at fourpence or fivepence a pound, leaving after all a better profit than could be obtained by conveying the beast to the boiling pot. Doubtless other plans may hereafter be invented, and doubtless there is here a wide field for practical scientific investigation. Of this, at least, we may be now certain, that the problem which has to be solved is one that can be solved; and the generation now living may hope to benefit by a conquest which shall bring us legs of mutton to substantiate its glory.

LEAVES FROM THE MAHOGANY TREE.

DESSERT.

Alas! for that time, "how far unlike the now and then," when, little John the Baptists that we were, with our heads in chargers of frill, we cared not yet for any of those toys of humanity, double firsts, mitres, seats in parliament, fox-hounds, yachts, &c., those unsatisfying toys, and were supremely happy with what we had been expecting for several hours—the fat plump fig with the golden seeds, and the spoonful of West Indian jelly, which were solemnly handed over to us after dinner, on the night of the annual party, by the tall severe gentleman (friend of the family), who evidently regarded our arrival from the nursery with the intensest disgust, thinly covered over by a miserable varnish of gay benevolence.

On those rare dinner-party days it was our habit to prowl round the butler's pantry and keep a bright look out about the top shelves for those green dishes full of almonds and raisins, those piles of oranges stuck proudly with stiff shiny laurel leaves, or those little morasses of golden green preserve, showing dark against the sparkling light of cut-glass dishes, generally supposed in the family to be of priceless value. The search being illegal, the very illegality gave it a kind of charm. It partook of the character of poaching. It became then a serious speculation among us junior members of the family what there would be, at dessert; whether chesnuts, or if the cherry brandy would be brought out; if there would be a pine or a melon; whether the grapes would go round, and ever reach us; whether we should refuse biscuits if they were likely to deprive us of a chance of a second orange, and so on. No stockbrokers on 'Change, no slippery rogues with a new martingale at Wiesbaden, ever speculated more on possibilities than we youngsters did as we brushed our hair to go down after dinner. Then was the time that fruits were enchanted things to us, and always seemed fresh from fairy land.

The Persian melons with the obscure Arabic inscriptions on their rinds worked in white threads, were just those that turned into Cinderella's coaches. Those leather coated chesnuts came from Don Quixote's country. Those little bags of wine, called grapes, grew on the Rhine—perhaps by the Rats' tower where the wicked bishop was eaten up. Every fruit had its story, and was at once a picture and a legend.

That pleasant little combination dish of fruit that they bring you after dinner at a French restaurant, called Les Quatre Mendiants, as strongly suggests a legend, as does the French name for aromatic vinegar—the Vinegar of the Four Thieves. The latter story is, that rubbed over with this pungent liquid, four thieves of Marseilles, during the time of the great plague in that city, succeeded in safely plundering the dead. The Four Beggars is an equally suggestive name. Who were these four beggars? In what reign did they live? Did they ever live? Were they Holbein men, with great slashed sleeves, tasselled with bunches of greasy ribbons—old soldiers of Francis the First, perhaps, who had wrestled with the Swiss? Were they not grim brown scarred rascals, ripe for the gallows, gashed by Bernese and Oberland halberds, and beaten about by Burgundian partisans; nimble at cutting purses; nimming heavy gold chains; snatching silk cloaks and feathered velvet caps with cameos and jewels at their sides; dexterous at threading crowds at preachings and processions—sturdy, resolute, heartless, merry, desperate, Heaven-forsaken scoundrels, living for the moment and under the greenwood tree, with their heads against the dead deer, sleeping away the thoughts of the future? Would not Callot have sharply etched their rags and ribbons, and Rembrandt have watched them through a prison grating, while horrible Abhorson was grinding his axe in the courtyard and blinking at the sun; would not Salvator Rosa have sketched them as they lay on a rock under a shattered oak-tree, gambling with torn and greasy cards for a gold crucifix and a pearl rosary; would not Teniers have pictured them revelling at a village inn, drunk at skittles, tipsy at shuffle-board—swaggering, swearing, pulling out knives, hugging, or stabbing!

It was this same dish about which we once found some stray French verses, written on the back of a wine list in a café in the Palais Royal. They ran, if we may be allowed to roughly paraphrase them, somewhat thus;—and if pointless, they are at least picturesque:

QUATRE MENDIANTS—(THE FOUR BEGGARS).

Once on a time, in the brave Henry's age,
Four beggars, dining underneath a tree,
Combined their stores. Each from his wallet drew
Handfuls of stolen fruit, and sang for glee.

So runs the story. "Garçon, bring the carte—
Soup, cutlets——Stay, and, mind, a matelotte.
And, Charles—a pint of Burgundy's best Beaune;
In our deep glasses every joy shall float.

"And, garçon, bring me, from the woven frail
That turbaned merchants from fair Smyrna sent,
The figs with golden seeds—the honied fruit
That feast the stranger in the Syrian tent.

"Go fetch us grapes from off the vintage rows,
Where the brown Spaniards gaily quaff the wine
What time the azure ripple of the waves,
Laughs bright between the green leaves of the vine.

"Nor yet, unmindful of the fabled scrip,
Forget the nuts from Barcelona's shore,
Soaked in Iberian oil from olives pressed,
To the crisp kernels adding one charm more.

"The almonds last, plucked from a sunny tree
Half way up Libanus, blanched as snowy white
As Leila's teeth; and they will fitly crown
The beggars' fourfold dish for us to-night.

"Beggars were happy, then let us be so;
We've buried Care in wine's red glowing sea;—
There let him soaking lie—he was our foe—
Joy laughs above his grave, and so will we."

The History of Cooking, from the Deluge to the Passing of the Reform Bill, would be one of the most stupendous works that ever ruined a publisher. It would run to, say about three hundred and thirty-two volumes folio, without the index, and would secure the author a limited income, but an enormous fame. Perhaps the world is hardly ripe for it yet. Let the globe go on turning its round sides like an enormous apple to the sun's fire for a century longer, and perhaps then it will be ready for the book. One volume would be dedicated to the gay and smiling subject of "Desserts," and a pleasant anecdotic little pamphlet of four thousand and odd pages it would make.

The dessert of the middle ages had no special character. There would be a good deal of Cellini cup, and Limoges plate, and Palissy dish, and gold chased goblet, about it, and perfumes and spices enough no doubt. We picture the cakes like wedding cakes, heavy, full of citron, rather indigestible; and we imagine certain errors of taste marring the whole affair: as in Ben Jonson's time, when at a lord mayor's feast a beribboned dwarf jester at a given signal took a flying header into a huge bowl of custard, to the alarm, terror, indignation, and delight of the aldermen, the court gallants, and the ladies, whose ruffs, farthingales, and slashed hose of silk and satin must have been cruelly splashed and spotted.

In the times of the Medicis and the Bartholomew massacre, the French and Italian nobles had a curious custom of always carrying about with them in the pockets of their silk doublets costly little boxes full of bon-bons.

Henri Quatre, Mary de Medicis, and all their friends and foes carried about with them little gold and Limoges enamelled boxes, still to be seen at any sale of Messrs. Christie and Manson's; no doubt there was one full of red and white sugar plums in the pocket of Mary Queen of Scots when she fell dead at the foot of the block in Fotheringay. You may be sure there was one in the pouch of grisly Duc de Guise, with the close cropped bullet head and the long spidery legs, when he lay dead and bleeding on the polished floor of the castle of Blois; no doubt as he fell, with a dull thump, a stream of red and white "ten thousands" rolled along the marqueterie. It was a childish custom, it proves that the age had a sweet tooth, and a more boyish taste than ours possesses, but it must have been useful for diplomatic purposes and highly conducive to flirting. How the custom must have helped to develop character and illustrate temper! Sir Anthony Absolute could snap his box down and refuse a bon-bon, or Malvolio could smile and present his with a bow and a conceited grimace. Jaques would moralise as he gulped a red almond, and Mercutio, holding one between his finger and his thumb, would rattle out a dozen quips before he swallowed the sweetmeat with a laugh and askance look at scornful Beatrice.

It is in Robert May's "Accomplished Cook," published in 1665, five years after the glorious and never sufficiently to be remembered Restoration of that Father of (a good many of) his subjects, Charles the Second, after, as Marvell said, he had been, like the son of Kish, in exile,

Seeking his father's asses all the while.

—It was at old Lady Dormer's, that this zealous servant in his eager pursuit of fame devised a central ornament for a dessert. It gives one a strange notion of the tasteless luxury and coarse pleasures of the society where Rochester fluttered and where Buckingham flaunted. Mr. Robert May expatiates largely on the skill and art required to build a large gilded ship of confectionery; its masts, cabins, port-holes, and lofty poop, all smart and glittering: its rigging all ataunto; its bunting flying; its figure head bright as gold leaf could make it. Its guns were charged with actual powder, its cargo was two turreted pies, one full (O admirable invention!) of live birds, the other (O incomparable ingenuity of the Apician art!) of frogs. When borne in by gay pages to the sound of music the guns were discharged, the ladies screamed, and fainted, so much so as to require being held up and consoled with sips of Tokay, the gallants all the while smiling and applauding.

This done, says the zealous and thoughtful man, to sweeten the smell of powder; "let the ladies take the egg-shells full of sweet waters (also part of the cargo of the vessel), and

throw them at each other, and all danger being seemingly over by this time, you may suppose they will desire to see what is in the pies, and when lifting first the lid off one pie, out skip some frogs, which make the ladies to skip and shriek; next after the other pie, whence come out the birds, who by a natural instinct flying in the light will put out the candles, so that what with the flying birds, skipping frogs, the one above, the other beneath, will cause much delight and surprise to the whole company." At length the candles are lighted and a banquet brought in, the music sounds, and every one with much delight rehearses their actions in the former passages. "These," says May regretfully (for the immortal dish was invented in the reign of James the First) "these were formerly the delight of nobility before good housekeeping had left England, and the sword really acted that which was only counterfeited in such honest and laudable exercises as these." Such were the sports at Whitehall when black-browed, swarthy "Old Rowley" presided at the table, on which grave Clarendon condescended to smile, and which Evelyn and Waller may have watched with bland approval.

The House of Brunswick brought over sound Protestantism, but German taste. Cookery grew cumbrous, dull, and uninventive. A vulgar naturalism became the fashion with the Germanized Italian and French cooks of the eighteenth century. Horace Walpole, great about trifles, incomparable decider of the width of a shoe buckle, keen despiser of all follies and meannesses but his own, neat and fastidious tripper along a flowery path over this vulgar and pauper encumbered planet, derided the new fashion in desserts. Jellies, biscuits, sugar plums, and creams, simple, unpretending, and pleasant facts had long since given way to fashionable inanity, and fashionable rusticity to harlequins, gondoliers, Turks, Chinese, and shepherdesses of Saxon China. This was the Pre-Adamite formation, but these fantastic creatures, wandering about a desert in a meaningless way among dry frizzly groves of curled paper and silk flowers, were soon discovered to be insipid. By degrees the great minds in the white nightcaps soared higher (the imperfect metaphor must be excused), and there appeared at my Lord Clacklemore's dessert and at the Earl of Tattleton's dinner table, meadows full of paper cattle all over spots, sugar cottages where Damon and Chloe lived when they were not at the Ridotto, or ambiguous Madame Cornelys's great masquerade in Soho-square; pigmy and long-legged Neptunes in cockle-shell cars domineering over oceans of looking-glass and rumply seas of silver tissue. My Lady Fitzbattleaxe, the Honourable Miss Hoopington, and plain Miss Bluesacque, came home from Chenevix's and the India shops, laden with dolls, babies, and little gods and goddesses, not for their children but for their housekeepers. Gradually even such brains as those of Frederick Prince of Wales, whose chosen companions were Desnoyers the dancing master, and Bubb Doddington the toady, began to deride these little puppet shows that figured in the centre of the Burgundy glasses and the dishes of maccaroons. The Dilettante society and fashionable visits to Rome and Florence awakened expanded notions of art. The grandeur of size now struck these pigmy dandies. The ambitious confectioners of the fashionable squares aspired to positive statuary, spindle legged Venuses, and barber's dummy Marses, in affected postures. Walpole mentions a celebrated confectioner of Lord Albermarle's, who loudly complained that his lordship would not break up the ceiling of the dining-room to admit the heads, spear points, and upraised thunderbolts, of a middle dish of Olympian deities eighteen feet high.

But even this flight of my Lord Albemarle's confectioner was surpassed by an enthusiastic contemporary in the service of the Intendant of Gascony, at a great feast given in that province in honour of the birth of the Duke of Burgundy. The nobles of Gascony were treated with a dinner and a dessert. The latter concluded with a representation, by wax figures moved with clock work, of the ceremonial of the sick room of the Dauphiness and the happy birth of an heir to the great monarchy.

This reminds us of the over zeal of the late Duke of Beaufort's Neapolitan confectioner, whom Mr. Hayward describes as deeply impressed with the dignity of his art. His grace was one night in bed fast asleep, and with the curtains drawn snug, when "he was 'ware of an excited knock at the door several times impatiently repeated. Somewhat impatiently the duke stirred in his warm nest, sat up, pulled the curtains back, and asked testily who the —— was there?" A voice answered in broken English:

"C'est moi seulement—it is only me, Signor Duc. I was last night at the opera, and was dreaming of the music. It was Donizetti's, and I have got one grand idea. I rose from my bed. I invented a sorbet. I have named it after that divine composer, and I hasten avec la plus grande vitesse to inform your grace." This reminds the narrator, from whom we quote, of Herbault's address to an English lady of rank, when he hurried to her hotel to announce the completion of an order for a turban and ostrich feathers.

"Madame, after three sleepless nights the feathers are arranged."

The Prince Regent, whose tastes inclined to a sort of vulgar and spurious Orientalism, at one of his costly feasts at Carlton House, had a channel of real water running round the table, and in this swam gold and silver fish.

The French epicurean writers say that the dessert should be the girandole or crowning tableau of the dinner. It should surprise, astonish, dazzle, enchant. If the dinner have fully satisfied the sense of taste and the well-balanced appetite, the dessert should address

itself to the soul through the eyes. It should rouse sensations of surprise and admiration, and crown the enjoyments that commenced with the removal of the cover of the soup tureen: that Pandora's casket of a bad dinner: that joy and triumph of a successful and tasteful repast.

The dessert is allowed by all French writers to be Italian in origin. The maître d'hôtel, before the Italian dessert arrived, gloried in large dishes, mountains of fruit, and sticky hills of sweetmeats. The elegance was clumsy and ostentatious. There was no poetry in it. Paul Veronese's picture of the Marriage of Cana, will give some idea of the primeval French dessert. The newer fashion consisted in those futile trees, and shrubs, and orchards, and gardens, abused by Horace Walpole; but Frenchmen delighted in the seas of glass, the flower-beds formed of coloured sand, and the little men and women in sugar promenading in enamelled bowling-greens. This custom had not been introduced in 1664—1666, when Louis the Fourteenth gave those magnificent fêtes at Versailles, of which Molière has left glowing descriptions. The sand gardens first appeared in France in 1725, at the marriage of that miserable and selfish voluptuary Louis the Fifteenth with Queen Mary of Poland; and it is said that this princess, brought up in misery and obscurity in the little town of Wissenbourg, was delighted with the fantastic new fashion. It is in the nature of art and science to advance from conquest to conquest. Sir Humphry Davy once said, science grew so fast that even while he was preparing for the press, his work had to receive constant alterations. Desforges, father of the author of several romances, and the comedies of The Jealous Wife and Tom Jones in London, was the first decorator of those days. He introduced imitation foliage, and gave to the frizzled muslin what was then considered, in the words of one of his eulogisers, "Un si grand air de nature et de vérité." To him succeeded another great creature, De Lorme. De Lorme had not such profundity of imagination and creative genius, yet he still found laurels in Paris to harvest, and what he left ungathered were stored up by Dutfoy, of the Rue de l'Arbre Sec, who, circa 1805, immortalised himself by forming the centre of his dessert of palaces and temples of the severest proportions, of perfect taste, and of vast extent. Domes, cupolas, huge peristyles, galleries in perspective, elegant porticoes, columns, entablatures, architraves, were moulded by his ingenious and skilful hands. The profiles were of remarkable purity, the ornaments of exquisite taste. The appropriate attributes with which he adorned his temples rendered mythology an after dinner study, at once agreeable and instructive. To these temples this great man added woods and groves (the trees full of nature), and adorned them with groups of figures of Sevres. He almost gave movement and life to these extraordinary pictures, and, by managing his light and shade with taste, lent an enchantment to the whole, turning even a wood of frizzled muslin into a slice of fairy land.

But the great Dutfoy did not rest here. Naught with him was done while aught remained to do. He was exactly like Cæsar as far as that went. He had already ransacked earth, air, water, to please the senses; he now thrust his hand into the fire. He sought the aid of the pyrotechnist, and that artist, roused by friendship and money, hurried to his succour. He mixed harmless Chinese and scented fireworks with his temples and Greek shrines; at a given signal fire was brought and the carefully concealed match lighted. In a moment the Temples of Dutfoy were the centres of a whirl of coloured fires; a thousand gerbes darted to the ceiling, and shed their scented sparks on the astonished and delighted guests. The noise and fragrance of this fountain of light, flame, and colour, produced a surprise undisturbed by the shadow of a fear, for the sparks in spite of their brilliancy were so innocent, that even the finest and most gauzy silks and tissues received no damage from them. Every one allowed that Fairy Land, on a Royal birthday, had been presented to their eyes, and that no more lively and splendid way of terminating a banquet had ever been devised.

It was at this same time that sugar rocks strewn with delicacies, were also fashionable at desserts, with fruits glacées au caramel, pyramids of bon-bons, iced cheese, &c. At the same period a Parisian confectioner won eternal or almost eternal fame—say six months fame—by preparing for state desserts, the principal scenes in the Opera of "the Bards." Ah! those were times. A confectioner had to keep his wits about him then, and to be at the same time icer, confectioner, decorator, painter, architect, sculptor, and florist. Yes. There was room for genius then. A dessert might run to ten thousand crowns.

The dessert is meant for the eyes more than the stomach. Yet what bright and pleasant things have been said "over the walnuts and the wine;" what pretty and gallant compliments paid as filberts have been cracked! How agreeable it is on a winter evening to see a broadside of honest chesnuts bounce and bang from the lower bar of the grate, what time the miserable and tepid formality of smuggling them in, wrapped in a napkin, has been forgotten for the quiet comfort and enjoyment of a really friendly party. The dinner is over, its toils, its glories, are past; we are now in a flowering prairie of idleness, with nothing to do but to try fruits, and to sip at all preserves that are not at discord with our wine.

Take it altogether (conventional as it is) no one would wish the custom of dessert abolished. It is a pleasant little fruit harvest; but the ladies must no longer be suffered to leave us, now the three bottle days are gone for ever. And if English families would only get into the quiet enjoyable German way of part singing,

and would teach their young people to sing, dessert would be the best time for a little agreeable unostentatious cosy natural music.

CINTRA.

A WINDY DAY IN THE SOUTH.

In the brake are creaking
The tufted cranes;
And the wind is streaking
With sullen strains
The welkin chill'd by the wandering rains.

In the Quinta, under
My garden wall,
The lemon-trees yonder
By fits let fall
Now an emerald leaf, now a pale gold ball,

On the black earth, studded
With drops so bright
From the fruit-trees, budded
Some pink, some white,
And now overflooded with wan yellow light,

As the sun from a chasm
O'er the cloudy hill,
With the jubilant spasm
Of a sudden will
Leaps, and stands, for a moment, still.

But the wind bewilders
The dizzy weather,
And those sky-builders
That put together
The crumbling walls of the cloud-piled ether

From the mountains hasten,
In pale displeasure,
To mortice and fasten
The bright embrasure
Of his lattice, lit from the innermost azure.

Over freckled furrows
To where, in the sides
Of the hills it burrows
(As a reptile hides)
The long-back'd many-legg'd aqueduct strides.

To the dim plain, mottled
With farms and crops
From the far folds, wattled
On the mountain tops
Faint music of bells and of bleatings drops.

By glimmering lanes
Down the slopes below,
The cumbrous wains,
In a creaking row,
Drawn by the dun quiet oxen, go

With fruits and casks
To the sea-side land,
Where Colares basks
In the sunlight bland
Over yellow leagues of pine-scented sand

The mule-bells jangle
In the mist down there:
The dew-drops spangle
The aloes up here.
Hark, to that sound, as of hosts drawing near!

'Tis the turbulent beat
On their craggy beach
Of the thousand feet
(Each trampling each)
Of the wild sea-horses, far out of reach.

When that sound you hear,
As you hear it now,
So hollow and clear,
You may surely know
Foul weather's at hand, tho' no wind should blow.

But the oakwood is sighing,
And cannot find rest
On the next hill. Flying
Around her black nest,
The raven hath brought to her young ones a feast.

The sierra is sullen:
Penalva moans:
The torrents are swollen:
The granite bones
Of Cruzalta crackle with split pine cones.

But a moment past,
On the green zig-zag
Of the Pena, fast
To the piney crag
Stood castle, and turret, and spire, and flag.

Look up! In what seems
To be empty air
They are gone—like dreams;
And the sharp peak, bare
As a beardless chin, is upslanted there!

Can mason'd court,
And keep, and tower,
Be carried in sport
By the cloud and shower
Away, like the leaves of a shatter'd flower?

These are the acts
Of the wizard wind.
What was solid departs
And dissolves. You find
Mere fluid and film, in its stead, combined.

But safe from the weather
(Like cloister'd maids)
Calm, and together,
Down resinous glades,
Which only the hermit bee invades,

The primroses yet
Are alive, I know.
And no rain can wet,
In the thicks below,
Last year's dried things, that have fallen thro'

To those tangled roots
Where the haresfoot cleaves,
And the ivy shoots,
And winds, and weaves
Her own with wild sarsaparilla leaves.

Yon smoke, that twines,
As from tapers snuff'd,
Straight over the pines
Till—caught and rebuff'd
At the edge of the cliff, where the wind has luff'd—

It is softly turning
To a downward haze
(From the charcoal burning),
Delays, and strays,
And is scatter'd in twenty different ways.

But see! at length,
At length (will it last?)
The buoyant strength
Of the bounding blast
Hath broken a breach in the grey: and fast

It is driving the mist hence.
There flickers again
Strange light in the distance:
Blue sea and brown plain,
And one long leaden-colour'd slant cone of soft rain!

THE NORTHENVILLE ELECTION.

CHECK TO THEIR QUEEN.

For two or three days after the ball given nominally by Lady Vance, but really by her brother, the Honourable Captain Streatham, candidate on the other side, I felt almost as if we had been defeated. Only ten days remained before the nomination would come on. Mr. Mellam left the entire management of affairs in my hands, and gave me whatever cheques I asked for without a question.

I have mentioned before that there were two newspapers in Northenville, the Mercury and the Independent. Each of these prints had its "own correspondent" in town, who furnished the paper with a London letter weekly. The Independent, which was the organ of our opponents, was published on Wednesday; the Mercury, our own paper, appeared on Saturday. Both papers used to boast of their respective London correspondents, and the editors of each used to speak openly of these gentlemen by name. No one who had ever been in company with Mr. Dane, of the Independent, could help knowing that the correspondent of his paper was Dan O'Rind, one of the cleverest but most needy men in London, who never had a sixpence two hours after he had received his weekly salary. It was through Dan that I intended to play my trump card, and for that purpose, armed with a cheque from Mr. Mellam, I left Northenville for London on the Friday evening after the grand ball which Lady Vance had given at the Crown and Sceptre Inn.

On Saturday morning I was at O'Rind's chambers, and found, as I expected, that he was not out of bed. At first I got no answer to my repeated knocks at the outside door of his rooms, for Dan's visitors were, as a rule, more numerous than welcome, and he generally had some little legal affair on hand which it was more judicious to ignore than to acknowledge. But after calling out my name, and being aware that some one reconnoitred me through a small port hole, I was admitted into the interior, where I found my acquaintance in the state of dressing gown, and his rooms in the state of confusion, which appears to be choice with the briefless class of barristers who live fast and "have no work to do" in a legal sense. But to speak to a man before he has either tubbed or breakfasted is not wise, and so I merely bade Dan make haste with his toilet, and join me in an hour (it was already past twelve o'clock) at the Albion in Russell-street, where I would beg him to partake of as good a luncheon as that excellent house could give us, and then would put something in his way which would be a clear one hundred pounds' gain within next week. Before the time specified he was at the Albion, where I had already ordered luncheon, to which he did great justice. By two P.M. we were in the smoking-room up-stairs, and there, over cigars and a couple of "cobblers," I told O'Rind that I required the services of a clear-headed lawyer who could speak French and German, to proceed to Strasbourg, and thence to Baden, Munich, and Vienna, to examine the register of births in certain churches, of which a list would be given him, and report progress to me in London. The job would probably take him from four to five weeks to get through, and the remuneration attached to it would be two guineas a day, besides all hotel and travelling expenses. In the mean time I was ready to hand him over one hundred pounds on account, provided he started that very night, would he accept it?

Would he not? The only thing that puzzled him was the shortness of time in which to find some one who would write his London letter for the Northenville Independent. His leaders for the Damager could be easily provided for in the office of that paper, but where could he find a correspondent for the Independent?

That, I said, should be provided for, and in such a manner that the guinea a week which that journal paid its correspondent should not be lost to him during his absence, for I had a very talented young friend who would be only too glad to do the work. All he had to do was to write to Mr. Dane at Northenville, and state that, having been selected by a legal firm to prosecute a most important inquiry abroad, he would be absent from his post for some weeks, and that in the mean time a well-known and very talented writer (whose name he was not at liberty to mention) would continue his correspondence for the Independent. Letters from this gentleman to the paper would be initialled P. W., and all letters from Mr. Dane to his locum tenens might be addressed to his chambers in Costs-court.

The letter for Mr. Dane was written there and then, and at eight o'clock I saw O'Rind off to Folkestone by the tidal train from the Victoria-station.

On the following Monday, just as Mr. Dane was preparing the usual clippings from the London Observer, the Sunday Times, and other weekly papers, with which he made up the "stuffing" for his paper on Wednesday, he received a telegram from London to the following effect:

From T. S. Staines, Tredbury-court, Fleet-street, London, to John Dane, Independent Office, Northenville:

Come up at once. Meet me to-morrow, three P.M., Great Northern Hotel. Six or seven hundred pounds in your way. Don't delay an hour, or you will lose all chance. Telegram reply to me at Great Northern.

Now, as the Independent was always published early on Wednesday morning, Monday and Tuesday were, of all others, by far the most inconvenient days in the week for Dane to leave home. At first he determined he would not go, but then he thought that six or seven hundred pounds were not to be had every day. The work was well on, and he could easily get his reporter (provincial papers seldom have sub-editors) to do all that remained to be done. The London letter would only come to hand by the first post next day, but that would merely have to be given over to the printer. One leader was already in type, another he could write before the mail train passed through Northenville. But if he was to keep the appointment at three P.M., he must leave that evening. Moreover, Mr. Staines, of Tredbury-court, was a very old friend of his, and would certainly not have summoned him to town unless there was really need of his presence, and a chance of his gaining money. Still, he hesitated, and ended by sending a telegram to ask whether Wednesday would not do as well as Tuesday, and what the business was about.

To this he merely got the brief reply: "Wednesday will be too late; you must come at once." And so, finishing off his work, he departed in all haste by that evening's train for London.

On the Wednesday morning that Mr. Dane was in town, there appeared the usual London letter in the Northenville Independent. The readers of that celebrated journal, as usual, turned first of all to what was always considered the most amusing and the most interesting part of the paper, but were not a little astonished to find that it contained nearly a column concerning the Honourable Captain Streatham, which was anything but flattering to that gallant candidate for parliamentary honours. It began by lamenting the fact that a mere guardsman, who was quite out at elbows, should be selected as a candidate to represent the important and rising town of Northenville. It gave a complete history of the money dealings of that handsome spendthrift during the last ten years, and at the same time let the public into certain secrets connected with his private life which were much more amusing than moral, and which would certainly not have been read aloud in any young ladies' school, even if tenanted exclusively by "girls of the period." It went on to say that having no other means of raising the wind, the honourable captain was now going to use Northenville. He would get the town to endorse his stamped paper, as it were, by sending him to parliament, and would then discount his M.P.-ship by obtaining some colonial appointment which would enable him to retrieve his fortunes. It asserted that not only all the Carmine party in London was both grieved and astonished at the selection of a candidate for this great town, but that the government was determined to send down another man, who would ere long issue his address to the electors, for the premier did not like to see his party in the House of Commons strengthened by mere "gay" men, who entered parliament in order to keep out of debtors' prisons. The letter wound up by strongly advising the electors of Northenville to wait, and not to pledge themselves to Captain Streatham, for that another candidate in the same interest would be amongst them in a very few days.

"An enemy hath done this thing," was Mr. Dane's remark when he arrived from London on the Wednesday evening, after remaining in London long enough to convince himself that the telegram was a hoax, and that his friend Mr. Staines, of Tredbury-court, Fleet-street, had never sent him any messages whatever. The Independent issued on Thursday an extra sheet, stating that what its London correspondent had said about the respected candidate of their party was not true, and that some intrigue had been carried out in order to get the editor away from his post for a few hours. But the mischief was already done. Even in the columns of the Mercury the letter would have been most damaging; but appearing as it did in the organ of Captain Streatham's own party, it was a mine sprung in their own camp, which did far more injury than any shot from their enemy could have effected. The captain was frantic, and at first nothing would persuade him that he was not the victim of a conspiracy got up by Mr. Dane himself. This idea he did not, however, long retain after he had learnt that the old and trusted correspondent of the Independent had gone abroad, and that Mr. Dane had been induced to leave his post the very first day that the new correspondent's letter was received at Northenville.

But another shot was in store for the supporters of Captain Streatham and his party. Their own paper, the Independent, with its damaging letter respecting their candidate, appeared on the Wednesday, and the following Saturday our paper, the Mercury, was published. The London correspondent of that paper was looked upon as an amusing writer, and as one who was particularly well informed on all social anecdotes and scandals connected with fashionable life in the metropolis. Of course, the first thing everybody did when they received the Mercury on the day I speak of was to turn and see whether its correspondent said anything about the great scandal of the day, at least so far as Northenville was concerned; and there was a paragraph on the subject, which although short, was cleverly put together with a view of injuring the enemy.

"I have been very much astonished at a letter which has appeared in your contemporary, respecting an honourable captain, who seeks to misrepre-

sent your town in parliament. How very bad must be a case which the advocates of its party cannot deny or even palliate. What I grieve for is the fact that all the London correspondent of your contemporary has said about one of the candidates for Northenville is but too true, and, I am sorry to say, but too well known to all men who mix in London society; but still I deprecate this opening up of private scandals, which can do no possible good by exposure, and must hurt the feelings of friends and relatives greatly. Why the Independent should damage the interests of its own candidate by raking up tales which, although true, would be better buried in oblivion, is more than I can imagine. Of course, Captain Streatham's chance of getting in for Northenville is now gone for ever."

An open attack upon the gallant captain from our columns would have done his cause good rather than otherwise. A covert hint that what had been said of him was true, but that our correspondent did not approve of this mode of showing up a man's private affairs, was a masterpiece of policy. But I had not yet played my last trump card.

The other side tried very hard indeed to find out who had dealt them such a blow as getting command of the London correspondence of their paper for the day, and whisking the editor off to London at the same time. But it was of no use. They suspected us all—they of course suspected me—but no trace could they find. And indeed Mr. Dane, unwittingly, did his best to hinder the discovery. The first thing he did after reading the damaging London letter in his own paper, was to write and tell Dan O'Rind that before leaving town he ought to have made over the London correspondence of the Northenville Independent to some person who was not merely competent to conduct it, but who would not have put himself to do the enemy's work in their political camp. "The injury you have done the paper," continued Mr. Dane in his letter, "is irreparable, and I should not be doing my duty to my supporters in this town if I suffered you to retain any longer the position of our London correspondent. I therefore beg to enclose a cheque for the money due to you, and to state that any further communications from yourself or any of your friends will not be used."

This letter—knowing both the handwriting and the postmark—I of course opened in O'Rind's chambers in Costs-court. I kept it by me for a day or two until my plans were fully matured, and then forwarded it to O'Rind at Vienna, enclosing him a draft for fifty pounds, begging him to give up all further research for the present, and to come home at once.

Three or four days before the nomination of candidates was to take place, the good people of Northenville were astonished by the appearance of an address from a third gentleman who offered himself as a candidate for the honour of representing Northernville in parliament. These addresses were signed "D. O'Rind," and were dated from "Costs-court, Middle Temple, London." The writer professed to come forward on the purest principles of the Carmine party, and in everything he proposed for the future government of the country he went at least a hundred yards beyond Captain Streatham. His address—I wrote it myself for him—denounced our party in the most unmeasured terms, but at the same time spoke very bitterly of "bloated aristocrats" who, because they or their relations have interests in the county, attempt like wolves in sheep's clothing to get into the fold, and call themselves Carmine, when they are neither more nor less than a bad Mauve. Better far, said this unflinching friend of the people, better far to vote for a real outstanding Mauve like Mr. Mellam, than for a half and half aristocrat like Captain Streatham.

"Divide and conquer" was my policy. I saw that Mr. Mellam's only chance was to divide the opposite party; and by causing them to split their votes, we had every chance of winning. O'Rind was delighted at the chance of getting into parliament, small although that chance was. I offered to pay all his expenses, provided he would keep the thing quiet, and made good to him tenfold more than he had lost by having to give up the London correspondence of the Northenville Independent. He entered fully into the spirit of the affair, and began his canvassing in earnest. Had he been brought forward at the commencement of the battle, we should have gained little or nothing by his help. But as it was, coming as he did immediately after the letter which damaged Captain Streatham's chance so much, a number of people promised him their votes. He had a way of canvassing and talking people over, which did him infinite credit. At talking about children, noticing all the little boys and girls in the place, making boon companions of any one and every one who could be of the slightest use to him, he was almost as good as Captain Streatham himself. The Northenville Independent was of course furious. The Carmine party, it declared, was throwing away its best chance of representing Northenville. To divide that party, and split up the votes, was utter madness, and was playing the game of the Mauves. The Mercury abused Captain Streatham and Mr. O'Rind alike, but of course saw that they were playing our game, and paving the road for our success. O'Rind had no local print in which to advocate his own election, but his old colleagues in the Evening Damager were faithful to him, and every morning that paper used to arrive from London containing something or other in praise of the "only real independent candidate for the town of Northenville."

There was one person mixed up with this election who certainly bore me no kindly feeling; that was Lady Vance. She firmly believed—and I won't say that she was not right—that had it not been for my management of Mr. Mellam's business, her brother would, as he used to say himself, have won the race in a canter. Her ladyship was far too old a hand at electioneering work not to see through the

movements of her enemies, although she had not perhaps always the foresight to prevent them. The correspondence about her brother, and the bringing Mr. O'Rind forward as a candidate, she saw through quite clearly, and felt certain from whom these ideas had come. "You have checkmated us, I fear," she said to me in a shop where I met her. "No, my lady," I replied, "we can only as yet say check to your queen." She took the reply and the compliment together very kindly, laughed, and said that she had still a move to make on behalf of her brother, of which I should hear presently.

The next day, much to my surprise, I saw Sir Charles Vance ride into Northenville, and go straight up to the lodgings where O'Rind was living. For Sir Charles to call upon any one of lower rank than himself would have been thought a marvel in the place. But for him to pay this attention to an utter stranger, a poor barrister who made his living by his pen, and had had the impudence to oppose Sir Charles's brother-in-law, was a miracle which was the talk of the town that night. Sir Charles, although a very kind hearted, was a most haughty man. His family was one of the oldest in England, and, as he used to boast, his estates had come down from father to son for nearly six hundred years, without a break. He was wealthy, was proud of his position, proud of being one of the leading man amongst the gentlemen of the county, which he had represented ever since he was of age. A well read man, but taking great pleasure in all the usual pursuits of an English gentleman, he was fastidious in the acquaintances he made, although his hospitality was unbounded. His place, Llanholme Court, situated about six miles from Northenville, was a splendid old residence, and was kept up in a princely style. Sir Charles lived at it from July to Easter every year, the intervening months being always spent at his house in Berkeley-square. As I said before, to see the baronet ride into town and call upon Mr. O'Rind was not only a marvel; it showed that the Streatham party were really afraid of this new enemy which I had brought into the field.

It did not do, of course, for me to be seen much with Mr. O'Rind, nor to profess more than a mere passing acquaintanceship with him. I was not a little curious to know what had passed at Sir Charles's visit, but had to put off all inquiries until the next evening, when I walked over to his lodging. And my surprise was not small when I was told by the servant, who opened the door, that Mr. O'Rind had gone to dine, and was to sleep and pass the next day at Llanholme Court—Sir Charles Vance's place. I felt that Lady Vance had made a move upon the board which would diminish our chance of winning the game, but what that move was I could not yet imagine.

It was on the Friday that O'Rind went to Llanholme. He was to remain there all the Saturday and Sunday, and return on Monday. On Tuesday the nomination was to take place. Coming events cast their shadows before. I felt that there was something wrong in the plot, or rather that the counterplot was working against me, but I never dreamed of the nature of the blow.

On Monday afternoon I had strolled down into the coffee-room of the hotel used as our head quarters, to get some luncheon. The waiter put the Times, which had just come, into my hand, and the first paragraph that caught my eye was the following from the Observer of the previous day:

"We understand that D. O'Rind, Esq., of the Middle Temple, has been appointed Puisne Judge for the colony of Tansgoria. Mr. O'Rind was called to the Bar about fifteen years ago, and goes the home circuit. He has lately been talked about as a candidate for Northenville, but will, of course, now retire from the contest."

No wonder that Lady Vance looked triumphantly at me the next time we met.

THE SAILORS' SHOW ON THE SEINE.

In the roadstead, the Lovely Helena from Buenos Ayres; the Magician from Costa Rica; the Moonshine from Trinidad; Queen Marguerite from the Havannah; the Europe and the Rothschild from New York; together with a fleet of smaller craft, all standing toward the wide mouth of the Seine, in a brisk, invigorating, cheering breeze, in the month of August! The stages of the signalling stations are crowded, seaward, with bronzed port authorities; and over their heads is a maze of cordage displaying every variety of signal. The pier head is thronged with friends of sailors who are coming home; with rough gamins who would be better off afloat than loafing and begging in most unsavoury rags; with Paris dandies in stage-nautical costume accompanied by ladies in the latest out-of-town fashions, who give a sharp little scream at every wave that laps the stone front of the noble port. Struggling with the broken sea, a little steamer comes puffing across from Trouville, laden with a tumbled throng of fashionable people, very sea-sick. Great bustle on the jetty. Three baskets are slung up to the signalling post, and the ships that were standing bravely in, tack off with much plunging and clatter, and screaming from the shrouds. A hundred telescopes are projected seaward. A confident little skipper's clerk, who has been zealously misinforming a select group of Parisians during the last half hour, confidently opines that the Pereire, from New York, is in the roadstead. A black hull breaks through the haze. The fleet of sailing vessels have made way for her, and the Napoleon Jerome, Imperial yacht, enters the port. Then the fleet tacks about, and a line of three-masted vessels glides home to the docks. Flags of many nations pass the signalling station. Far away as the base of the hills, far as the eye

can pierce, masts peep, thick as needles in a case. The ships invade the streets; bowsprits almost touch the groups of men who chaffer on the open exchange. Interminable rows of beer-shops, wine-shops, ships'-chandlers, seamen's lodging-houses, oyster-sellers, slop-tailors, and vendors of foreign birds and shells, wind about the docks. There are Dutch and English and Spanish and Portuguese inscriptions on the walls. The passages to some of the cellars are fantastically paved with oyster and other shells. All the toys in the toy-shops are nautical, and cordage and spars and anchors are in every direction. Man's natural seat appears to be a herring-barrel. Boys in flannel caps carvè models of boats. You take up the paper; there is nothing to read in it except port arrivals and departures, accidents at sea, cargoes expected, and cargoes that have been sold, with telegrams of wind and weather from all parts. You cannot possibly get out of it at the table d'hôte; there is nothing but pilot cloth; upon every peg there is a pea-jacket. Sou'-westers dangle overhead as you walk the streets, and call up ugly reminiscences of times when you have looked at the captain carving a boiled leg of mutton in a lively sea, and thought he presented the most ferocious figure human cruelty has taken, since the days of Cain. Fish and tar are the perfumes of the place, here and there broken by a little defective sewerage. With the help of a tropical sun, these essences are liberally diffused. You pause to glance into a jeweller's window, to decide whether you will buy a couple of pulleys for sleeve-links, or a figure-head for a pin, and you find yourself the immediate neighbour of an equally meditative gentleman who is attentively bearing home a string of horse mackerel as delicate marks of his domestic affection. The curiosity shops are the sweepings of sailors' lockers; and the Parisians sail down and carry off cocoa-nuts in the outer shell with the excitement and air of persons who have made some important discovery in natural history.

The very place for a Sailors' Show, or maritime exhibition of all nations! All the materials are at hand. Samples of the sailors of all nations are on the spot. Ships of all nations are in the docks. But this was not the idea of the authors of an international maritime exhibition. There must be presidents and vice-presidents, commissioners and deputy commissioners, jurors, and supplementary jurors. There must be a vast plan; an inaugural hymn; a commemorative ode; an apposite chorus. The flag and the big drum must be provided for. There must be groups, and sections, and classes, and sub-classes, concessions and royalties. Accordingly, a building is designed in humble imitation of that which occupied the Champ de Mars in Paris, last year. There are circles within circles, a central garden, an international club, a park spangled with varieties of highly painted buildings and grottos; of course, a colossal orchestra and a "fairy-like coup d'œil." The main entrance on the Boulevard Imperial, is in a line with the façade of the town hall. You enter by a Napoleon the Third gate. Without, is the Sailors' Show, in vast docks, at the mouth of a majestic river, spread in broad acres of picturesque and manful industry. You pay your money at Napoleon the Third's gate, and you are in the Sailors' Show—in a box.

There is a strong muster of models of ships, and boats, and new nautical inventions; of masts and sails and all kinds of tackle; of marine instruments, chronometers, fishing nets and lines, lifeboats, belts, and coats; ship stores, including the mustard of M. Bornibus, which (the visitor is informed) enjoys extraordinary renown in England as well as in France. You are invited to buy and still to buy. Verily the sailor has strange things in his Show. He is vastly fond of jewellery, and vigorously puffs his false diamonds. He deals, it would seem, to a positively extraordinary extent in Lyons silks, and has taken to the children's linen trade. He doats on confectionery and ices; and a shop he has opened in this line at Trouville, is incessantly besieged by the nobility and the "fashionables." Moreover, he has a "lazy stomach," and the doctor having strongly recommended him to try the essence of the waters of Vichy, he has tried it, in the form of a spirit of peppermint, fabricated with the finest champagne brandy. He was a rough customer in the old day; but now his needs include the most exquisite china, and the daintiest crystal. Roman and encaustic tiles are needful to him. Time was, the legend says, when Jack threw a tooth-brush overboard as a nasty thing. But now, the most eminent members of the faculty puzzle themselves to make him an electrical tooth-brush, and to sweeten his morning toilette with an Arabian elixir. Civilisation has marched of late with such giant strides that no prudent sailor now goes to sea (as I judge from his Exhibition), without a sewing machine: to say nothing of an ample supply of printing materials and a lithographic press. But we have touched only on the least wonderful of the advances Jack has made within this century. His comprehensive eye includes every conceivable contingency of a maritime life. Hence, he will on no account be left to the wild waves, without having in reserve, a full set of agricultural implements, a fire escape, a saddle, a bridle, and a harmonium or two. Jack, refined, sublimated, by our later civilisation, has taken to the fine arts, and must have a chef d'œuvre or two in his cabin. Hence his show would be wretchedly imcomplete without a fine art annexe. He doats on flowers, and has become no mean authority on the relative values of animal and vegetable manures. The carriage department of the Sailors' Show is, perhaps, its strongest feature. After a running visit to the Sailors' Show in a box, the visitor cannot fail to be startled by the multitude of misconceptions in regard to maritime habits, and wants, and customs, which he has gathered, perhaps too carelessly, from Sailors' Shows in port, and upon the open sea. Jack includes a very noble

aquarium, in the show he has boxed up by the mouth of the Seine: in which the ladies and children may be daily horrified by the contortions of living samples of Hugo's pieuvre, and lobsters in their black habit as they live. But with all his airs about agricultural implements, we cannot congratulate Jack on having become a first-rate landscape gardener yet. He has had all the local grandees in their scarfs; civilisation has been duly toasted in petit bleu; a gentleman from Jersey has cemented the alliance between the two great nations of the earth, with an oration of the smallest wafer power; and what with bands of music, a widely diffused taste for seeing anything and everything, magnificent phrases, and reduced fares, the Sailors' Show may pull through to the satisfaction of the speculative gentlemen who have governed it.

We confess, as nautical students, to a decided preference for the Sailors' Show out of the box, which encompasses the "Maritime International Exhibition." At the risk of being set down as dunderheaded, the chiel who has taken these notes remains fast in his belief that the International Maritime Exhibition which is spread over spacious highways around the docks of the Liverpool of France is a much truer, much more instructive, and much more honest one, than that Bazaar crowned with the eagle and the tricolor which is planted by the dusty Boulevard Imperial, in the interests of shop-keeping, rather than of navigation, past, present, or future. The commissioners who talk about helping forward civilisation, and include bull-fights in their programme, are not trusty guides to our dull British mind, even when they come backed by an approving nod of Alexandre Dumas père. Whom Heaven preserve!

A SPECIAL WIRE.

In the department of electric telegraphy, as in many other things, the Americans have long been in advance of us. They spend more money, and use the wires much more lavishly for the transmission of intelligence to the newspapers, than we do. The New York journals are specially remarkable for their enterprise in this respect, and they frequently accomplish achievements which leave the journalists of this country far behind. This is specially the case during the sittings of congress. Day after day whilst the session lasts, ten or twelve closely packed newspaper columns are transmitted between Washington and New York. These include the speeches of the principal speakers in the debates, the political letters of the special correspondents, and all the accidents, crimes, gossip, and general news, which can be collected.

Although the English press has been excelled by the American in this respect, there has of late been such an united move in the direction of employing the telegraph more freely and frequently, as to promise something like a revolution in the future. The Scotch and Irish daily newspapers have already inaugurated the new era, and are accomplishing marvels in their own way. They are striving, and with very considerable success, to collect the latest current news of each day, for publication in next morning's issue. London being the great centre of all intelligence is of course made the head quarters. Three Irish and four Scotch newspapers have each what is called a "special wire"—that is, a telegraph wire between London and Dublin, or London and Glasgow, as the case may be, the exclusive use of which the newspaper commands from seven o'clock in the evening until three o'clock next morning. The telegraph companies merely let or "farm" the wires for a certain amount, and, beyond providing clerks to work the instruments, take no further charge or responsibility. The work of collecting the news devolves solely upon the newspaper proprietor, and this part of the undertaking is alike the most troublesome and the most expensive. London is daily and nightly swept for rumours and offences, and the utmost diligence is displayed to collect everything of interest that transpires.

There is a little staff of officials employed on the work. Reporters, sub-editors, leader writers, special correspondents, have each their own defined departments; and what information they collect and transcribe is nightly despatched to its destination for the delectation of next day's readers. Whilst parliament is sitting, the chief portion of the material is procured at Westminster. During important debates, the speeches of the great men are reported in full and sent off the same night; it has sometimes happened when Mr. Gladstone or Mr. Disraeli has been delivering a long oration, that the compositors in Edinburgh and Glasgow were putting into type the first portion whilst the last was being spoken. On one or two occasions when Earl Russell's reform bill of 1866 was trembling in the balance, the Edinburgh editors attended the House of Commons, wrote their leaders, and sent them down by wire to the capital of Scotland.

The principal Scotch and Irish journals may thus be said to be reported, sub-edited, and sometimes edited, in the metropolis, so far as regards the most important part of their intelligence. The labour, care, and anxiety, expended on the accomplishment of this object are much greater than is ordinarily supposed. And everything is done at full speed: the economising of time being as vital and important as the economy of space on board a ship of war.

Half an hour often decides success or failure. Towards the small hours of the morning it is a race between time and the telegraph. The critical period is between midnight and two o'clock in the morning. A good deal of the most valuable of the day's intelligence arrives at the instrument room during those two hours, and then is the time to see the clerk upon his mettle. Perhaps the Prime Minister has made a great speech at half past ten o'clock, at the

Lord Mayor's banquet at the Mansion House; Her Majesty's Opera-house may have burst into flame after the footlights were extinguished; Mr. Bright may have been provoked into a furious attack upon Mr. Disraeli towards the close of a protracted debate; a block of houses may have fallen in Tottenham Court-road, as the inmates were retiring to rest; events like these of the utmost public interest occur almost weekly in London, during the season, and energy must meet the emergencies. It may safely be predicated that whatever "copy" is sent to the telegraph office after midnight, is important. The wires are not kept going for the mere sake of working them and getting the money's worth out of them. If the news after eleven o'clock be of a trivial or uninteresting character, none is transmitted.

But when the rattle of Hansom wheels is heard in the street below, or the eager step of the hurrying messenger is recognised climbing the stairs, the clerk knows that there is work to be done, turns up his shirt sleeves, and prepares for the struggle. He throws himself into the work with the headlong zeal of the enthusiast, and "panting time toils after him in vain." If he be skilful, he wins in the race of four hundred miles between London and Glasgow, and succeeds in transmitting one hundred and twenty words in sixty seconds—thus beating Father Time by sixty seconds. Wonderful as this may seem, the feat is even refined and improved upon when the occasion demands. Minutes are calculated as covetously as Pedro Garcias calculated his doubloons. The correspondent who is burdened with a late speech, or fire, or heartrending occurrence, or mysterious scene, or suspicious circumstance, or brutal assault upon a personage in high life, sits by the side of the clerk at the instrument, and scratches the tender, the harrowing, or the picturesque, according to the nature of the subject he has in hand. As soon as he has written one page, containing perhaps only two sentences, the transmitter seizes it and commences the despatch. When page number one reaches its destination, page two is written, and the process is repeated till the story is concluded. The correspondent sits in a room high in the air at Threadneedle-street, and by the aid of an electrical pen writes manuscript in Glasgow. The miracle is accomplished almost simultaneously. The writer in London is only one page ahead of his confrère in the capital of the West, and four minutes after the reporter sitting within a stone's-throw of the London Exchange has finished, the transcriber in the Glasgow Exchange has also ceased from his labours, and the thrilling account, or graphic description, half a column long, is partly in type in Glasgow, and undergoing the process of hasty correction for the morning trains. On other occasions when time is still more pressing, the ready correspondent will not trouble himself to write, but will dictate by means of the slave of the wire, in accents audible and comprehensible as those of the human voice, to a man, who shut up in a small room, is burning the midnight oil four hundred miles away in sleeping Edinburgh.

The chief newspaper proprietors have further improvements in view. They propose to establish offices in London, and, now that the telegraphs are in the hands of the government, the wire will be led into the metropolitan office, and also into the printing offices in Scotland. This will be a great improvement upon the existing system, and will be much more convenient. The correspondent in Fleet-street will then be able to do his Scottish work with as much comfort and despatch as he would in the High-street of Edinburgh, writing within hearing of the click of the type. Greater facilities will be afforded for sub-editing the matter collected in the course of the day. At present, the newspaper attachés are only allowed entrance to the instrument room, upon sufferance; no accommodation is provided for them; and they have not proper opportunities for arranging and collating their news. The consequence is, that the wire frequently suffers from plethora: the reporters and collectors of intelligence throughout the city having sent in twice as much as can be transmitted.

The duty of selection and abridgement devolves upon the sub-editor, who oftentimes toils at the task from seven in the evening till long after the midnight chimes which Master Shallow so often heard. Print, manuscript, and flimsy, cumber the table before him; and he has to read through the mass, correct, alter, summarise, re-write, and boil it down into manageable and intelligible proportions. Carefully as this process may be done in London, it requires to be repeated, with even greater care and circumspection, in Glasgow. The telegraph news is twice sub-edited, and very laborious the process occasionally is. The matter looks well, and reads well, in the morning papers; and the public imagine that the wire is "fed" at one end, and the manuscript merely lifted away by the printers at the other. This is a great error. The news arrives at the printing office, in a state of what is technically known as "pie," utterly shaken and broken up, as it were, by its long journey, and requiring, in a measure, to be rehabilitated before being handed to the compositor. It is often mixed and jumbled, sentences are shattered and confused, titles dropped out, capital letters distributed in irregular detachments and the whole is without arrangement or punctuation. The matter is sent off in paragraphs from London, but it arrives in Edinburgh in a consecutive and seemingly endless string, one subject running into the other, requiring the closest inspection to decide where the one ends and the other begins. The close of the funds, unfeeling conduct of a Welsh parson, death of a cabinet minister, brutal outrage by wharfingers, rumoured resignation of the premier, list of Lent preachers, flagrant case of cruelty at Whitechapel, falling in of the Thames Embankment, daring outrage in the streets, affecting

shipwreck off Cornwall, execution at Preston, closing quotations of pig iron, follow each other in careless and comical sequence, unbroken by colon or period; and have to be separated and tabulated by the sub-editor. A brief speech of Mr. Bright's on the Irish question will arrive embedded in strata of favourites for the Derby and the funeral of Bob Chambers at Newcastle. Four children will suddenly lose their lives by drowning, at the close of a touching peroration in a sermon by the Rev. Charles Kingsley at the Chapel Royal. The political gossip will wind up with the stations of the British army, which will again slide into the return of her Majesty to Osborne. If a train go over a steep embankment, it is pretty sure to land in a goldsmith's shop pilfered of its valuables, which in their turn will be swallowed up in a quicksand off the Scilly Islands, or a bog of unintelligibility respecting the proceedings of the Reform League. If a clergyman drown himself in a pond in Devonshire, heavy falls of rain are general throughout the country, and wheat will promise to be a fair average crop, as if in consequence of the sad transaction. Does Mr. Disraeli celebrate harvest home in Buckinghamshire, a new comet will be discovered in America, and a large prairie fire will consume three thousand wandering buffaloes. Thus reads the "copy" as it comes from the wire, inconsequential as the wanderings of a sick man.

The matter is further complicated by the necessity of transmitting private newspaper messages at intervals. Thus Mr. Gladstone, in the full heat of his denunciation of the Irish church, will suddenly descend from the high ground of justice and equity, to tell the sub-editor to "keep himself open for two columns of minion upon the Board of Trade inquiry into the loss of the Solent." A glowing and graphic description of the naval review at Spithead will have its pleasant continuity cut short in the middle, by an advertisement relating to cast-off clothing, which it is necessary to get through as soon as possible, in order not to delay the putting of the first side of the newspaper to press. The money market statistics will occasionally have their aridity relieved by a statement that General Peel has seceded from the ministry. When any piece of news of more than ordinary interest arrives, whatever may be in course of transmission at the time is stopped until the important message is despatched. It accordingly often happens that a ministerial crisis, or a loss of twenty lives, or the death of a great potentate, is wedged into the midst of a report upon the weather and crops, or a prolix wool circular. Hence, apart altogether from considerations of punctuation and correction, the necessity for the most careful revision of the manuscript.

In spite, however, of the greatest care on the part of the sub-editor, mishaps occur, some of which must sorely perplex the reflective newspaper reader. For instance, in the parliamentary intelligence, between the speeches of Mr. Horsman and Mr. Mill, he will find a distinct and prominent line running thus: "Take Beresford Hope from Ordinary," as if the genial member for the potteries had been attending a farmers' club, dining, and was unable to return home. The real meaning is, that Mill's and Horsman's speeches have been reported specially and verbatim; but the reporter not attaching the same weight to the utterances of Mr. Hope, advises the sub-editor to take the summary of his speech from the manuscript supplied by the ordinary telegraph company. On other occasions, when the hour of going to press is nigh, and there is no time either for revision or correction, readers of the first edition may get the following nut to crack: "It is almost certain that the Bribery Bill will pass this session. New par. I hear that parliament is likely to be prorogued on the twenty-fourth. New par. The hot weather is sensibly diminishing the attendance of members at the house. New par." The latter words mean "new paragraph," this being the mode by which the writer of the parliamentary gossip intimates from London to the sub-editor in Glasgow that he wishes each separate paragraph to commence with a new line.

Considerable feats are performed by the special wire during the parliamentary session. As many as seven columns of a debate have, in the course of an evening, been reported at Westminster, been transcribed, been sent to the telegraph office in Threadneedle-street, been transmitted to Glasgow, been re-transcribed there for the press, and set up into type, corrected, and printed in next morning's newspaper. During the dead season, however, when parliament is on the moors and at the sea-side, when Belgravia is desolate, when the clubs are deserted, politics extinct and rumours moribund, the wire might as well be abolished too. Even the vast maelstrom of London, with all its magnetic and attracting influence that draws all things into it, is no place for the collection of news.

The newspapers which do not depend upon "sensation," and titles of eight lines in large type, after the fashion of our American cousins, are then content to allow their energies to rust unused for a space. Those of the "go-ahead" class, however, telegraph at all hazards, every scrap of information that can be clipped out of the London evening papers. The consequence is that paragraphs are frequently sent four hundred miles and are honoured with the dignity of leaded type, which would be rejected, were they quietly, and at no expense, handed into a newspaper office at Edinburgh. For two months together the public is treated with the remainder biscuit of the year.

When things are working smoothly, the large instrument room at Threadneedle-street is all order and decorum. There are about thirty instruments altogether, fitted up with the bell apparatus. Between five and six of these are kept going simultaneously, despatching and receiving messages. The head clerk sits at an

elevated desk, so as to sweep the whole room with his vision, and his duty is to register in a book the hours at which the manuscript arrives, to apportion the labour of the subordinates, and to look after the messengers. No sounds are heard save the intermittent click of the handles of the instruments and the shrill and tumultuous rhythm of the bells. Should the fates be adverse, however, the room is a scene of uproar, perplexity, and excitement. The debate, perhaps, has been very late, and piles of "copy" have been poured in at a late hour; portions of the manuscript are illegible; the messenger who has the first speech in his pocket does not turn up for an hour after the second messenger with the second speech has arrived; three pages of the most important part of the oration of the evening are missing; messages are pouring in from Glasgow that the compositors are waiting. Swearing both loud and deep is heard, porters hurry up and down the long flight of stairs, the clerks work at their instruments savagely. The sub-editors are in despair. They furiously ask themselves why they were ever born, and stigmatise telegraphs as an invention of the nether pit. Bundles of manuscript in one hand, evening newspapers in the other, blacklead pencil behind the ear, a penknife in mouth, they move about among the clerks, fretful and heated, cutting down the "copy," adding something here, taking away something there, stopping one thing in mid-transit to send off another, while the bells jangle and wrangle as if in diabolical triumph.

Thus it goes on, until London wakes up with the grey morning, when, unheedful of the wonders they have been accomplishing, the pale clerks crawl languidly homeward.

PHENOMENA OF MUSIC.

The Marquis de Pontécoulant has published a lecture* on The Influence of Sound on Animated Beings, which, he holds, has been very imperfectly studied. A few writers, indeed, have recorded facts more or less extraordinary in their nature, but none of them have investigated the real causes of those facts. We propose, first to notice some of M. de Pontécoulant's "facts," which are both interesting and admissible; and then to quote, if not discuss, his causes — about which there may be two opinions.

From Dr. Abercrombie, he cites the case of Nancy: an uneducated orphan seven years of age, employed by a farmer to keep his cows. Nancy's bedroom was separated by a thin partition from another chamber, frequently occupied by a wandering fiddler who had considerable powers of execution. As he sometimes spent a great part of the night in practising difficult passages, Nancy repeatedly complained that the noise fatigued her: otherwise, she paid no attention to the music.

After a time, Nancy fell ill. A charitable lady, residing near the farm, took her home and nursed her. On her recovery, which was slow and tedious, Nancy remained in the service of her benefactress.

Some months afterwards, during the night, charming melodies were heard proceeding from an unknown source. The mysterious music, repeated at irregular intervals, excited the curiosity of the inmates of the house. Not content with listening, they tried to discover the invisible minstrel, and traced the sounds to Nancy's room. She was in a gentle slumber, and from her lips there issued a succession of notes resembling the tones of a violin.

It appears that at the epoch of her musical crises Nancy, once in bed, remained completely motionless. For an instant she mumbled indistinctly, and then uttered sounds like the tuning of a fiddle. A moment's silence would be speedily broken by a prelude performed with the lips quite closed. Then she attacked passages of great difficulty, always with her mouth shut, executing them with the precision of a consummate artist. Sometimes she stopped short abruptly, and repeated the sounds of tuning the instrument. Then, taking up the piece exactly where she had left off, she finished the performance as correctly as she had begun it. Two years afterwards, a pianist was equally able to call forth Nancy's imitative powers.

After this musical milkmaid, let us take a musical dog. At the beginning of the Bourbon Restoration, a wretched-looking cur attended the daily parade at the Tuileries. He forced his way among the musicians, defiled with them, and halted with them. The parade over, he disappeared until next day. The band appropriately named him "Tout-laid," "Thoroughly ugly," which did not prevent his becoming a general favourite. A subscription was got up to buy him a collar with his name engraven thereon. He was entertained by the musicians, each in his turn. His host for the day simply said, "Tout-laid, you will come and dine with me," and the invitation was at once accepted.

The repast at an end, Tout-laid took his leave, hurried off to the opera, found his way into the orchestra, and remained stuck up in a corner until the performance was over. What he did afterwards, nobody knew. The mystery enveloping that portion of his existence was never dispelled. But, one morning, Tout-laid failed to appear at the review, and his usual place at the opera was empty. The fourth day of his disappearance, the regimental band was stopped in its march by a funeral, which was unattended by a single human mourner, the only follower being an ill-favoured mongrel—Tout-laid himself! They whistled and shouted—all in vain. Deaf to their calls, and giving no sign of recognition, he doggedly followed the bier. Next morning the sexton found him lying dead in a hole which he had scratched on the common

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* Les Phénomènes de la Musique. Paris: Librairie Internationale.

grave of paupers. There could be no doubt about his identity. The collar bore the name of Tout-laid.

Cows are sensible to the charms of music. In Switzerland, a milkmaid or man gets better wages if gifted with a good voice, because it is found that a cow will yield one-fifth more milk if soothed during the milking by a pleasing melody. It might be expected that elephants would manifest musical taste. On the 10th of Prairial, year six, an experimental concert was given to Hans and Margaret—a proboscidian pair then residing in the Jardin des Plantes. The performers were all distinguished artists. The result was unmistakable. Melodies in a minor key especially touched their elephantine hearts; "Ca ira" fired them with transport; "Charmante Gabrielle" steeped them in languor. The spell, nevertheless, did not act alike on both. Margaret became passionately affectionate; Hans maintained his usual sobriety of deportment.

The sittings of the National Convention opened, not with prayers, but with musical performances. For instance, in the Moniteur for the year three, it is recorded that, at the sitting of the 9th of Thermidor, the National Institute of music executed the hymn to Humanity, and then the chant of the 9th of Thermidor, followed by a dithyrambic hymn of Robespierre's Conspiracy. Girard called for the Marsellaise; after which and the Invocation to Harmony, Tallien mounted the tribune to give an account of the Quiberon expedition. Our new reformed parliament will perhaps take the hint; making Yankee Doodle precede an American debate; Off She Goes, a discussion on rifled cannon; Flow on thou Shining River, introduce the budget.

Explosions offer a pretty group of phenomena which have made considerable noise in the world. Percy relates that, at the retreat from Mayence, thirty-six artillery waggons were blown up. The shock was so terrible that labouring women died in convulsions. Baudelocque mentions that, after the explosion of the Grenelle powder magazine, he was called to attend seventy-two women dangerously ill. Schmidt and Mesnard the surgeons assert that, after the explosion of the arsenal at Landau, in 1793, out of ninety-two newborn babes, a great number became idiots, whilst others dragged out a feeble existence.

The number of cases of deafness produced by loud and unexpected noise, is immense. Unusually powerful sounds have been known to produce giddiness, convulsions, epilepsy, inflammation; army surgeons continually observe that wounds get worse and refuse to heal, when a battle is fought close at hand and repeated cannonades are heard. At the siege of Dantzick, the wounded soldiers felt such violent pains in their amputated stumps, that they were obliged to support them with their hands. Wounds in the head, and compound fractures, became speedily mortal when the patients could not be removed beyond the influence of the noise. Animals even are not exempt from the ill effects of loud reports. After long-continued cannonades fired on the banks of the Rhine, the Danube, and the Vistula, shoals of fish have been taken from these rivers, killed by the force of the detonations.

On the other hand, there are occasions when the concussions of sound seem to exercise a curative influence. A gentleman who is hard of hearing, residing in the Department of Seine et Marne, always travels in a third-class railway carriage, because its rumbling noise enables him to hear perfectly whatever is said to him in a low tone of voice, which would be quite inaudible to him out of the carriage. The Philosophical Transactions mention the case of a woman who understood what was said to her, only when the words spoken were accompanied by the rolling of a drum. When the drum ceased to beat, the deafness returned. Haller remarked, on opening a patient's vein, that the blood flowed more abundantly at the beating of a drum.

Musical rhythm is the recurrence of an accent or beat at successive regular intervals. It is marked by what musicians call "keeping time," without which there is no good music. But even without music, there may be rhythm: as in the ding-dong of a bell, the plash of a water-wheel, the pulsation of a heart, or the uniform march of machinery. A railway train often runs with a rhythm to which you can easily adapt a tune, of which the engine will mark the time.* This regular rhythm is pleasing to the ear, producing a tranquillising and sedative effect. The restless child is sung to sleep by the measured movement of its nurse's ditty; and we have all heard of the miller who could find no repose until his mill, which had been stopped on account of his illness, was set agoing again. In every musical composition, the rhythm is marked by its division into equal portions called "bars."

Rhythm seems to have been the first means employed, in the infancy of art, to render agreeable to the ear a succession of sounds which, without it, would produce little or no impression. A march beaten by drums is far from disagreeable, although the noise of those instruments, without rhythm, would be unbearable. A simple change of the rhythmical beats, assists a march and accelerates its pace. Rhythm sustains and cheers the soldier during long and fatiguing journeys. Quintilian ascribed the valour of the Roman legions, in part to the influence of the horns and trumpets. When the worn-out column, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along, the commander orders the drums to beat; and the men step out with renovated vigour. By means of rhythm, semi-barbarous nations render their instruments of percussion less wearisome. The Greeks, at the height of their civilisation, attri-

* This was observed of common coaches, by the Conductor of ALL THE YEAR ROUND, in his Novel, Nicholas Nickleby.

buted to rhythm a great æsthetical power, considering it the sublimest part of music.

When the Egyptians wanted to transport one of their gigantic obelisks, placing it on a number of wheeled carriages, they harnessed men to them, not by hundreds but by thousands; and, as represented on ancient bas-reliefs, in order to animate this multitude by the same impulsion, a man, mounted on the monolith, sang a song, beating the measure with his hands. On board ship, the heaviest anchors are heaved by sailors stepping to a rhythmical chant. Horses feel the effects of rhythm. Not to mention the obedience of cavalry to the trumpet, note how the steeds in a circus alter their pace at a change in the music.

A troop of dancers amused a small Spanish town with their cachuchas. The monks of the Inquisition charged them with impiety. Arrested and brought before the Holy Office; after defending themselves as well as they could, as a last argument they begged the Tribunal to allow them to execute the dance which, they declared, was a very simple and innocent performance. The more spiritedly the music played, the more the dancers waxed in zeal. The excitement felt by the executants soon communicated itself to the spectators. The reverend fathers fidgetted on their seats, swaying themselves backwards and forwards, until, overpowered by the electric rhythm, they joined the culprits in their dance.

The effects of music are ascribed by M. de Pontécoulant to a special agent which he thinks he has discovered—there are mare's nests in every civilised country—and which, like electricity and caloric (in 1868!) escaping the notice of most of our senses by its tenuity and extreme transparence, may nevertheless possess sufficient active power to produce the observed physical phenomena. After long research, he was driven to admit the existence of a particular fluid, which may be regarded as the sonorous or musical element. The existence of this fluid, he urges, is admissible, "for it contradicts no mathematical truth and changes nothing in the existing laws of acoustics." The sonorous fluid, he explains, belongs to the same family as the electric fluid, the luminous fluid, and the caloric fluid.

The sonorous fluid, or musical magnetism, is made to account for the circumstance that, by lying flat on the ground, you may hear cannon fired more than sixty miles off. It also explains the quivering of peas placed on a drumhead, at a short distance from a field of battle, every time a shot is fired. At Laon, the Waterloo cannon were heard by applying the ear close to the ground, although they were inaudible to persons standing upright. The same agent renders audible at one end of a long beam, the taps of a pin's head at the other, although they are imperceptible through air at the distance of a yard.

By maintaining that vibrations in the air are the productive cause of sound, you may certainly explain some acoustic problems; but you can account for no important fact relating to the influence of sound on the human organisation. Whereas, by admitting the existence of the sonorous fluid, you can understand and easily explain all those phenomena, however astonishing—those, for instance, of sympathy.

Music being the art of combining sounds agreeably, sound is the raw material of music. No sound, no music. But, if you please, what is sound? We all thought we knew what it was long ago

Sound, according to M. de Pontécoulant, is due to a series of vibrations in elastic bodies, or in parts of those bodies, which communicate, not to the air, but to the invisible sonorous fluid, a series of like vibrations. The ear is not the only organ able to perceive sonorous vibrations. They are perceptible by other organs not in contact with the air, and must therefore be communicated by the invisible sonorous fluid. The old experiment of the soundless bell under the exhausted receiver of an air-pump, will be urged as an objection. But to make the experiment successful, there must be no solid communication between the bell and the table on which the air-pump stands. Otherwise, the sonorous fluid will escape outside, exactly as the electric fluid escapes by means of a conductor.

Sound is weakened or stifled in a vacuum, not because the sonorous fluid therein has become too rarified, but because the fluid finds there no medium whereby to propagate its repercussions. Aërial waves may accompany sound, but they are themselves set in motion by the sonorous fluid. In short, the science of acoustics may remain as it stands, even if we accept M, de Pontécoulant's sonorous fluid into the bargain. It is like the well-washed pebble in the soldier's flint soup—an additional ingredient, which, if it does no good, certainly does no harm; the speculations of Chladni, Helmholtz, and Tyndall, are certainly not in any way upset by it.

The New Serial Tale, HESTER'S HISTORY, commenced in Number 488, will be continued from week to week until completed in the present volume.

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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."—Shakespeare.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL.

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

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NEW SERIES OF ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

I beg to announce to the readers of this Journal, that on the completion of the present Twentieth Volume, on the Twenty Eighth of November, in the present year, I shall commence an entirely New Series of All The Year Round. The change is not only due to the convenience of the public (with which a set of such books, extending beyond twenty large volumes, would be quite incompatible), but is also resolved upon for the purpose of effecting some desirable improvements in respect of type, paper, and size of page, which could not otherwise be made. To the Literature of the New Series it would not become me to refer, beyond glancing at the pages of this Journal, and of its predecessor, through a score of years; inasmuch as my regular fellow-labourers and I will be at our old posts, in company with those younger comrades whom I have had the pleasure of enrolling from time to time, and whose number it is always one of my pleasantest editorial duties to enlarge.

As it is better that every kind of work, honestly undertaken and discharged, should speak for itself than be spoken for, I will only remark further on one intended omission in the New Series. The Extra Christmas Number has now been so extensively, and regularly, and often imitated, that it is in very great danger of becoming tiresome. I have therefore resolved (though I cannot add, willingly) to abolish it, at the highest tide of its success.

CHARLES DICKENS.

HESTER'S HISTORY.

A New Serial Tale.

CHAPTER VII. SOME ACCOUNT OF WHAT HAPPENED AT THE BALL.

Nothing outside the covers of a fairy-tale book, can be half so bewitching as the scene on which this company entered. No stage could present one with so gorgeous and vast a piece of grouping. No dream of expectation could foreshadow its shifting brilliancy, its dazzling variety. Mr. Campion the knave of diamonds, conducted Red Ridinghood to an excellent post of observation, where troops of dream people passed by them in the flesh: Cinderella and her godmother, Lady Macbeth and Robin Hood, popes and their cardinals, kings and their jesters. There were summer and winter, the devil and an angel, sylphs and mermaids, a savage and St. Agnes; the three weird sisters (three maidens in their bloom), the graces (three withered old spinsters in their paint). Some with masks and some without: glowing and glittering, laughing and jesting, sneering and ogling, coquetting and love-making; pointing witty speeches and ridiculing dull ones; dragging out bashfulness and tripping up blunders; fanning, blushing, sighing, whispering—so the motly crowd went by. Love jostled hate, and misery joy. Beauty rubbed skirts with ugliness, and security with danger. Youth aped age, and age aped youth. Virtue mimicked wickedness, and wickedness virtue. It was all very fine, yet the queen of spades thought but little of the pageant. Hester might have leisure to note the oddities and contrasts, but Lady Humphrey had only eyes for one sober-looking figure.

"Sir Archie Munro here!" said Pierce to his mother. "Surely that is he over yonder. What can bring him to London at such a time?"

And Pierce involuntarily doubled up his fist under his ruffles. It was an insult to his faith-

less Janet that this rival of his should be indifferent to her presence in his home.

"How dared he be there looking at her every day?" had been the lad's thought, but an hour before: now it was "how dare he be here, not caring whether she is there or not?"

"Perhaps he has come to London to arrange about the marriage settlements," he said, bitterly. "Or perhaps, indeed, he may even now be here in the character of Benedick."

"I think not," said Lady Humphrey. "Why does he not wear a mask, I wonder. It would suit him. Hist, Pierce! I will tell you—he is here in the character of an Irish rebel; his true character. His proper costume would be a pitch-cap, with a pike on the shoulder."

"Nonsense, mother! I beg your pardon! But you know you are a little astray on that subject."

"I am not going to harm him by talking," said Lady Humphrey. "You need not get excited, as you did upon another occasion. But I know why that gentleman is here."

Pierce was silent and uncomfortable. "Why, then, is he here?" he asked presently, unable to control his curiosity.

Lady Humphrey shook her head. "I think it is better to say nothing whatever," she said, a little mournfully. "His family were old friends of mine, Pierce—a truth of which you once reminded me."

The young man was silent again, glanced at his mother's face, once, twice, and hung his head with remorse.

"Forgive me, mother," he said at last. "I remember that other occasion well. I terribly misunderstood you on two points. Your conduct to Hester has delighted me of late. I will never doubt the goodness of your heart again, even for a moment, in a passion. If you know aught against Sir Archie Munro, I will never ask you to repeat it."

"It is safer not to talk here, at all events," Lady Humphrey answered drily, and turned away her face; perhaps to look through the crowd after Sir Archie Munro, perhaps to avoid the glance of her son's honest eyes.

"And now," she said presently, with a sprightly change of manner, "we will leave the gloomy subject of treason. We came here to amuse ourselves, did we not? Let Sir Archie Munro have a care of himself, while you go and take Hester about the rooms. And forget your saucy Janet for a time, if you can, and make yourself agreeable."

Pierce was fain to do as he was bidden, and so Red Ridinghood and the cavalier made a tour of inspection round the brilliant chambers, whilst the queen of spades returned to her hand, and was shuffled over and over again with her companions in a stately dance. That was the hour in which Pierce Humphrey unexpectedly found himself telling the story of his love and his troubles to Hester.

"Who is your saucy Janet, Mr. Pierce?" asked Hester suddenly, as they pushed through the crowd together.

Pierce Humphrey blushed. He felt startled, dismayed, ashamed; and yet on the whole rather pleasantly excited. His vanity half-hoped half-feared that Hester would be grieved to hear the story about Janet.

"Where have you heard? What do you know of her?" he asked evasively.

"Nothing," answered Hester, simply. "But I heard Lady Humphrey speak of her just now; and I thought I should like to know."

Pierce Humphrey sighed, but on the whole was relieved. There was no jealousy, no bitterness, in the young girl's tone. She was only at her old trick of wanting to give help. It was better so, better that little friendless damsels like this should have no hearts to get hurt. And it was pleasant for a man who had vexation on his mind to find ready-made sympathy at his hand.

"You were always willing to share a fellow's troubles, little Hester," he said, joyously. "And I should be glad, indeed, to hear your opinion of this one." And he plunged into his story, and told it frankly from beginning to end; how he loved a merry maiden called Janet, how the merry maiden had gold and beauty and a temper of her own; how he had been bound to her by a bright betrothal ring; but now, woe the day! he had happened to offend her, when she had flown across the sea, to bide under the roof of one supposed to be his rival. And lastly, how he was wasting for her sake; though he made efforts to pass the time pretty well.

Hester listened, patiently, attentively; weighing his difficulty, believing intensely in his pain, now and again asking a question as he went along; while they two threaded their way up and down through the crowd, he flushed, eloquent, gesticulating, so very much in earnest that Lady Humphrey catching a glimpse of him from a distance, grew uneasy. Had she not gone too far in thus keeping him so constantly with this Hester, who walked by his side a pale, absorbed, distraught looking little Red Ridinghood? Was he making an offer of his fickle heart, even now, to this dressmaker, whose work was already cut out for her so many bitter miles across the sea?

"I do not know much about such matters," Hester was saying at the moment, gravely, and with a business-like air; "but I should think the young lady must be true."

"God bless you for that, little Hester," said Pierce Humphrey, squeezing, in the enthusiasm of his gratitude, the hand that was holding on by his arm. "But how have you come to such a happy conclusion?"

"Why, you see," said Hester, earnestly and deliberately, as if explaining a knotty problem, "you are strong and brave and good natured, Mr. Pierce; and you love her a great deal, and you have told her so. And she had wealth of her own, and rich lovers; and yet she once promised to marry you. I should think she must be fond of you," said Hester, wagging her head sagely, as if too great a volume of evidence had been summed up to admit of there being doubt upon the matter.

This was the amount of Hester's wisdom and penetration, but it satisfied Pierce to the full. He glowed and sighed, and became more humble, more doubtful of himself, in his speech.

"You have not seen my rival, little Hester," he said, deprecatingly; "and you must not imagine him an uncouth mountaineer, with great coarse hands, and a brogue. Sir Archie is a travelled gentleman, wiser, better, more clever than I am. And he has a castle many hundred years old; and he has money at his bankers; and he has rare woods and mountains on his beautiful estate. Heigho!"

"All that makes no matter," said Hester.

"You are the pearl of comforters," said Pierce; "but these things make all the matter in the world. I am ashamed to confess that I have thought of them myself," he said, hesitating, and looking a little sheepish. "I knew that Janet was rich, and that I wanted money. But I would give all the money to you, little Hester, or to any one else, if she would marry me to-morrow;—and we could do the housekeeping on air," he added, ruefully, as if remembering how little hope there was of his ever being able to put his genuine feelings to the proof.

Now, soon after this arrived the very moment when Fate took up that puzzle of Lady Humphrey's, shook it into perfect shape, and dropped it in her lap.

I never could clearly understand how it was suffered to happen that Hester got separated from her party that night. The story runs thus, as far as it goes. Hester was thirsty, from the heat of the place, and the intentness of her listening. Pierce, after gleaning up every atom of sympathy and advice which she could ransack for him out of her heart and brain, responded to her complaint by rushing off gratefully to seek some lemonade for her refreshment. He placed her in the corner of a small dimly lighted room, where only a few people were wandering in and out. He ought to have taken her to his mother, no doubt; but then—where was his mother at the time? Besides, he was too careless, and Hester too ignorant, to think of the danger of separation in the crowd. He bade her not move till he should return.

And I am willing to believe that he intended to return with all speed, for Pierce was in the main a true-hearted lad, and he loved little Hester, after a fashion. But the history of his adventures in the meantime is obscure. Did he get into a quarrel with the confectioner? Did he also feel thirsty, after his talking, and drink just one glass of wine too many for his memory, so that he could not find the room to which he was bound to return? Or did he stray into a place where they were gaming, and linger a moment, only to see how the play was going; perhaps to get mixed up in it himself? Any or all of these escapades were possible to the young man at this time of his life. But that he was humble and contrite for his mistake next day is all that we are permitted to understand.

In the mean time the rest of the cards having been dealt about the rooms, Lady Humphrey and Mr. Campion followed their own will from place to place, keeping watch over that before-mentioned sober-looking figure. That this person was unconscious of observation Lady Humphrey had the best means of knowing. Had he once recognised her he would have approached her immediately, and greeted her with outstretched hand. But his thoughts did not seem busy with this company. He was a grave-looking man, about thirty-five years old, tall, slender for his height, but well-built, and stately. One might say, without much extravagance, that there was a sort of majesty in the motions of his figure, as he carried the long gown about his shoulders and limbs. His hair was a very dark red, as if the ruddy tresses of some sanguine ancestor were struggling to shine out through the duskier locks which nature had intended him to wear. His features were of the eagle cast, yet I warrant you there was nothing hard nor sharp in the countenance of Sir Archie Munro. Keen it might be, and bold and firm, for there was mental strength and nerve in every latent expression of his face; but the brave blue eyes knew well how to break into a smile, and the lips to relax into softness.

Sir Archie, watching for some one with anxiety, waited and was disappointed, waited still and was still disappointed. Lady Humphrey and Mr. Campion followed and lingered, and wondered and grew impatient. Was the man really more conscious of their presence and their motives than he would seem? Was he playing with them, tricking them; would he presently laugh at the useless cunning with which they had laid this little plan, the feeble effort they had put forth in it, and the hidden irritation with which its failure must harass them. Even Mr. Campion could not deny that this was possible in a treacherous world. But even while Mr. Campion's face was lengthening, a little black imp came tumbling up the room.

This young monster had flames shooting out of the top of his head, as well as other hellish adornments, and looked, for the credit of those who had so blackened and bedaubed him, a very worthy little scion of the house of Satan. The crowd parted with much laughter as he came whirling along wildly, spinning round and round on his hands and his toes, like a young acrobat. He had the awkwardness, or the ill-luck, or the cleverness, to trip over Sir Archie's feet and fall. That gentleman immediately bent down with the impulse of a humane man, alarmed lest the boy might be hurt. The little devil had seemingly a human perception of pain, was not proof against a bruise or a scrape, for he caught the good gentleman's arm, and held on by his hand while he groaned, and twisted, and whimpered, and rubbed his legs. And while this absurd scene was going on Sir Archie's palm became suddenly acquainted with a very slim morsel of folded paper, which

though it might not have expected to receive yet his fingers did not fail to close upon with care. And no sooner was that strong hand locked upon its secret, than the legs of our little devil became fit for further exercise; and with a sudden unearthly shriek, and a spring, he was whirling to the other end of the room. Lady Humphrey's eyes might be sharp, and Mr. Campion's might roll knowingly, but they should never see the writing on that slip of folded paper. They did not resist the natural impulse to turn with the crowd, and look after the tumbling imp; and when their gaze was released from the momentary obligation of following a popular absurdity, and returned to its more serious occupation, Sir Archie Munro had passed out of their ken.

He had taken his way to a quiet room where he could read his letter unobserved. And here are all its contents:

"I find that we are watched," said the note, "and so I fail to keep my appointment. Come to me at half-past four. I have made arrangements which will prevent any risk to you. For me it is all risk; but I sail for France to-morrow. I cannot leave without trying my personal influence, without praying you with my voice, in the name of God, to change your mind, and give us your help in the great coming struggle of our country. Eat this when you have read, if there be not a light at hand.

"Yours, full of hope,

"THEOBALD WOLFE TONE."

There was a lamp on a stand close by, and Sir Archie held the paper to the flame. The flash which consumed it made Hester look up; for this was the room in which Hester had been left sitting. It was deserted now by all but herself. One and another came, and looked into it now and again, and passed on. Hester glanced up, and saw the stern face and the burning letter. Sir Archie, even before holding the paper to the light, had observed the picture in the corner, and marked it. The shower of golden hair and the quaint little red cloak had first caught his notice as a matter of colour; a moment later it was the pale troubled face, and the downward abstracted gaze, the patient shadow of fatigue or sorrow round the eyes, the helpless clinging together of the hands, that had left the impress of a poem upon his mind. He had considered its depth and truth a little, even from under the pressure of his own weighty thoughts; been conscious of a latent question under the surface of his own anxiety of the hour—was this sorrow and piteous loneliness of spirit that he had looked upon, or only natural physical fatigue, and the involuntary patience of a minute's enforced waiting?

And where had Hester's thoughts been in the meantime, all the long hour during which she had sat there, with that grief-struck face? What simple, half-fledged dove of feeling, that had been wickedly lured to try its unformed wings, was she anxiously bringing back again to the safety of its nest? What grains of bitter husk was she winnowing in her heart that sweet wholesome material for the daily bread of life might be found lying at the bottom, for her storing when the folly of the chaff should have blown by? There are little storms for the very young, which if their purifying tyranny be but tolerated with meekness will nip all the buds of selfishness in the garden of the soul. And Hester was getting strengthened for the burthen of her future.

CHAPTER VIII. SOME FURTHER ACCOUNT.

SIR ARCHIE MUNRO had hardly passed out of the room where Hester sat waiting, when a person of venerable appearance, in the garb of a pilgrim, long grey beard, brown woollen gown, approached her leaning on his staff, and making a most profound salutation.

"Daughter," said he in a quavering voice, "thy party awaits thee with impatience upon the last step of the staircase. They have commissioned me to be thy escort to bring thee to them in safety. Place thy fair hand upon my arm, and these gray hairs shall be thy protection through the giddy crowd!"

Now it will doubtless appear that Hester was to the last degree simple and foolish to believe for a moment in such a style of address as the above; and it must be allowed that in the beginning of her days she was simple in the extreme from many points of view. But then if it had not been in her nature to put faith overmuch in the well-meaning of others, this history could never have been written. And if we would follow her adventures we must take her as we find her, with all her lack of smartness, her credulity, her untimely attacks of dreaminess, her enthusiasm. If we endure her helpless short-comings with patience we shall find pretty quickly how Time soon took her roughly into training; how Experience stepped in, and with a few puffs blew all the golden dust out of her hazy brains, leaving them strong enough and clear enough to do strong and skilful work in the hour which came to put them to the test.

In the mean time, we may say for her that she was at this moment, on this night, in this fantastic unaccustomed scene, utterly weary in body, terrified with loneliness, and almost stupefied by the depression of a new trouble; a weariness that a night's rest would cure; a forlornness which the presence of a friend could put to flight; a trouble that was the mere wraith of a trouble, made up of the mists of an unwholesome atmosphere, too low for her moral breathing, which must be scattered in sparks of colour by the first ray of the sunrise above those mountain tops towards which her unconscious feet were already stumbling. With all of which it must still be said that the weariness and the loneliness and the trouble were all present in this hour to afflict her; and how was she to know that they were things feebler than herself, with only a small hour allotted to them wherein to work their will upon her? She

was conscious only, at the moment, that they were with her, forcing her to admit that the gay path of variety down which she had been hurrying of late had ended all abruptly in a hopeless cul-de-sac. She could not see yet the little friendly postern, with its arch of benediction extinguished under the shadow of the frowning wall, the latch already lifted, the sun shining warmly through the chinks.

It is true, then, that she was dull enough to accept the idea that Lady Humphrey was waiting impatiently for her somewhere on a landing; that perhaps Mr. Pierce might be ill; and the fact that a somewhat strange-tongued messenger, picked out of a long past century, had been sent to fetch her, could not reasonably startle in a place where for the last few hours all ages had met together, all tongues had spoken in chorus, all costumes had been worn, and all manners had been practised. The longing for escape and the habit of obedience were both strong; and Hester rose with relief on the instant, and put her hand on her conductor's arm.

Once fairly launched in the great crowd, however, with her strange escort, she was not long left in ignorance of her mistake. It was plain that a group of mischievous young wags had played a trick upon her. They had observed her unprotected loneliness, and agreed to make a pastime of her difficulty. He who had so successfully imposed upon Hester had been chosen for the office because of the venerable appearance which his disguise presented. When he emerged from the inner room where he had played his part, with his prize upon his arm, his companions gathered round him, laughing and prating with a mischievous delight.

"Oh, pray, sir!" cried Hester, turning in dismay to her supposed protector, "take me back to the room where you found me. I do not know these gentlemen;—I cannot be the person you came to seek!"

Her companion replied on the instant by pulling off his long grey beard, his wig of snowy hair, his mask, and exhibiting the laughing roguish face and curly head of a youth not more than eighteen years old.

"Not so fast, pretty Mistress Simplicity!" he said, gaily. "Nay, you will never cut old friends in such a heartless manner. And when did you come up to the town, fair sweetheart? And how are all the charming little cousins in the country—Miss Buttercup and Miss Daisy, and the rest? And how does our champagne taste, after your curds and cream?"

So he rattled on, evidently the wit of the party, whilst his companions pressed close upon his steps, laughing and applauding in ecstacy at the fun. They were only a set of wild thoughtless boys, who had drunk much more wine than they were accustomed to, who ought to have been at home learning their Greek for the tutor, and who probably never would have entered such a place had their mothers been consulted. Perhaps had one of them taken time for a thought, and glanced at the same moment at Hester's frightened face, remembering that he had a sister at home, the merry-making might have ended much sooner than it did. But in the midst of the present glow and hum of such a crowd, the mystery of disguise and general abandonment to shallow wit and mirth, as well as with the fumes of wine and the madness of unusual excitement in their brains, where was the shadow of a chance that such wild young scapegraces as these should pause to think?

Some friend must come and rescue Hester. And where was there a friend to be found? She looked right and left, but nowhere was any person of her party to be discerned. Numbers of people came crowding to the staircase, to the doors, for it was wearing pretty far into the morning. And Hester's tormentors bent their steps towards the staircase. What crazy plan, if any, was in their heads, where they meant to take her, or where to leave her, Hester was destined never to learn. The little group, six flushed chattering boys, and one pale, speechless girl, were swept into a corner of a landing by a sudden pressure from the crowd, and remained there wedged into their places, unable even to move till some loosening of the human mass might be felt.

Hester, during these minutes, gazed anxiously up the staircase. The great lamps, swinging in mid air, had grown useless, their flame had waxed dim, for the pale green light of dawn was coming streaming through a vast upper window, with its pathetic suggestions about anxious mothers and dying children, sickening the gaudy colours on the walls, making the painted beauties hurry on their masks, and the showy gallants of the evening look haggard and dishevelled and uncleanly. But by-and-by, in the midst of the feverish faces, there appeared one different from these, overtopping most of the crowd, a quiet brave face, cool brows, eyes unsuffused, a face going forth, not ashamed to lift itself to look upon the sunrise, accustomed to breathe a breezy atmosphere suggestive of early rides when the first furrow is getting ploughed of a morning. Hester saw this good face coming down the staircase, and, for the first time, the idea sprang up in her mind, that she might appeal to a charitable stranger for protection.

Whether she could ever have summoned courage to do so is not known; does not matter. Sir Archie Munro's wide-awake eye caught the girl's frightened appealing look directed towards him, and responding to it interiorly like a true gentleman, he quietly so guided his course through the crowd that the girl soon found him, as if by accident, at her side. Desperation was at her heart then, and struggling to her lips. She need not be dragged into the streets of London by these worse than crazy youths. Sir Archie did not miss seeing the half-lifted hand and eyelid, that only wanted a little boldness to make a claim on his protection. He met the glance firmly, encouragingly, and a great promise of powerful help shone out of his steady blue eyes.

"You have lost your party?" he said. "These are not your friends? I thought not. Be good enough to put your hand on my arm, and have no uneasiness."

Then he turned to the scapegrace lads, who took different attitudes at his interference, some ready to pick a quarrel, some inclined for a more prudent retreat.

"Come, young sirs," he said severely, "begone and get you home to your beds. Such youngsters cannot be trusted out of the nursery without mischief. As the friend of this lady I owe each of you a horsewhipping, but I will let you off on account of your tender years. When you have slept on this matter, I trust, for the sake of the men you may one day become, that you will have the grace to feel ashamed of your conduct."

No other form of treatment could have punished the delinquents so keenly. Afraid of such terrible words being overheard, as addressed to them, they slunk away; one or two hanging their heads, the rest with a faint attempt at bluster and swagger.

After this was over and they had finally disappeared, Sir Archie and Hester passed half an hour on the staircase, watching in vain for a glimpse of any member of Lady Humphrey's party. At the end of that time Sir Archie became uneasy; looked at his watch, and grew more uneasy still. He had pressing business of his own on hand, important as life and death, yet how could he desert this trembling girl, whom he had volunteered to protect? At last he said:

"I fear it is useless our waiting here longer. Strange as it may appear, I think your friends must have left the place without you. If you will tell me your address, I will bring you home myself without further delay."

"Oh!" said Hester, with a new dismay; "but it is such a distance—such a very long distance — all the way to Hampton Court Palace."

"Hampton Court Palace!" repeated Sir Archie. "Ah! that is far, that is too far, indeed."

The hands of his watch were wearing towards four, and at half-past that hour it was required of him to be present in a very different place from this, and engaged upon far other affairs than the relief of distressed damsels. Whilst considering what there was that could be done he brought Hester down the lower stair, into the hall below, into the open air; and then without further pause he hailed a waiting vehicle, placed Hester within it, gave instructions to the driver, and took his place in the coach at her side.

As they drove along he explained himself. "When you reflect upon this adventure tomorrow," he said, "you will not blame me, I hope, for not consulting your wishes more than I have done. You must excuse me also if I have been brusque or stern. I am doing the best I can for you. It would be impossible for me to drive with you to Hampton Court to-night, and I could not send you on so long a journey in a hired carriage alone. I have not a moment to lose for my own part, and I am going to leave you in the only place of safety I can think of. To-morrow I will call to see you, and we will contrive to send a message to your friends."

The carriage at this moment turned into an old-fashioned square, with a dusty-looking garden in the centre, and tufts of grass growing up here and there between the paving stones. It stopped before a tall, wide, aged-looking house, with a gateway and windows which suggested that the house might have once been a nobleman's dwelling, perhaps in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. A great lantern hung before the entrance, whose flame still burned feebly in the grey daylight. Sir Archie, who had been scribbling in his pocket-book on his knee, sprang out of the coach, and pulled the heavy handle of a bell, which answered immediately with a great voice, that, in the utter silence of this place, they could hear making its sudden startling music among the passages and chambers within. Sir Archie then assisted Hester from the coach, led her to the still-closed door under the shadow of a great black arch, and placed a written leaf of paper, unfolded, in her hand.

"There may be yet some moments' delay about the opening of the door," he said, "and I have not one to spare. But you need not have a shadow of fear. You are safe to gain admittance here," he added, with a latent smile about his eyes and lips as he looked down at her standing with her passport in her hand, full of faith—"as safe to gain admittance, as if you were waiting at the gate of heaven itself."

And then Sir Archie returned to his coach, and gave a fresh instruction to the driver. A moment longer he waited to hear the first bolt withdrawn behind the massive door, and to let his eye dwell with infinite approval on the slim white strip of a figure, the pale rim of a cheek, the little red hood half huddled over the loose golden hair. Truly Sir Archie had the eye of an artist, since, even in a moment like this, he could make pictures for himself out of a masquerading girl, a patch of dawn-streaked sky, and an old black archway with its lantern. A man who had seen all the wonderful sights of the world ought to have been less easily charmed with such simple materials. Yet, long years later, it was found that this quaint bit of painting in the deserted old square had held its own in his memory, through light and through shade, against all the finer experiences of his educated eyes.

Meanwhile, Hester, standing on the grass-grown pavement, under the expiring lamp, and with the daylight brightening all round her, read the words written on the slip of paper in her hand:

"Dear Mary. [So ran the pencil marks.] Take the bearer in, and be kind to her. She is a young lady who has been parted from her friends by accident, through no fault of hers. I

know nothing of her father. She must, of course, communicate with her friends immediately. I will call to-morrow to see you, and we can talk about this, as well as many other matters.

"With kind love, your brother,

"ARCHIE MUNRO."

"Archie Munro!" cried Hester, aloud, in her amazement, and turned her head quickly over her shoulder to look after the retreating coach. It just passed out of sight, the sound of the wheels died away, and a large old rook, on a morning excursion far from his home in one of the parks, alighted almost at her feet, and hopped round and round her. But at the same moment the last of the bolts was withdrawn inside the queer old dingy house, the faint flame of the lamp was suddenly quenched overhead, and the great black door shuddered, groaned, and swung back upon its hinges.

LEAVES FROM THE MAHOGANY TREE.

A JUG OF ALE.

CLEAR and golden as sherry; creaming up as white as swans' down, in the long taper glass; fresh, bright, sparkling; with the pleasant aroma of the Kentish hop pervading the draught, gratefully nourishing and gently exhilarating—that is what a glass of good English ale should be—ale that Autolycus, a great judge on such matters, declared stoutly, as he went singing along the road to the shepherd's cottage, was "a dish for a king."

We can fancy the artful rascal, with oblique eyes and greasy cap with broken feather, sitting at the ale bench outside the Peal of Bells, *ale*-fellow well met, with Christopher Sly, whose illustrious family came in with "Richard Conqueror." Sly, being thirsty and more dry even than usual, has just called for a "pot o' small ale." He is telling Autolycus of his descent from old Sly of Burton Heath, and has also informed him that he (Christopher) was by birth a pedlar, by education a card-maker, by transmutation a bear herd, and now, by recent profession, a tinker. Fourteen-pence is the score for sheer ale chalked against him by the fat ale wife of Wincot.

Picture the scene at an Ostade alehouse. The sunset is red on the old faded sign, and on the dusty waggon at the door, red on the vine-leaves over the porch, red on the cups on the ale bench. It makes the face of Autolycus to glow with the cunning of a Mercury, and Sly's Bardolphian countenance to blaze again, as if he were peeping in at a furnace door. The fat Falstaff of a landlord breaks out laughing over the red curtain of the open lattice window; the fat landlady and the buxom servant roar from the upper window, at the jokes of the two merry guests. The waggoner and the ostler and the harvestmen laugh too, while a great bear of a shepherd's dog barks with delight, as Autolycus clears his pipes and sings his favourite song of

THE JUG OF ALE.

As I was sitting one afternoon
Of a pleasant day in the month of June,
I heard a thrush sing down the vale,
And the tune he sang was "the jug of ale,"
And the tune he sang was the jug of ale.

The white sheet bleaches on the hedge,
And it sets my wisdom teeth on edge,
When dry with telling your pedlar's tale,
Your only comfort's a jug of ale,
Your only comfort's a jug of ale.

I jog along the footpath way,
For a merry heart goes all the day;
But at night, whoever may flout and rail,
I sit down with my friend the jug of ale,
With my good old friend the jug of ale.

Whether the sweet or sour of the year,
I tramp and tramp though the gallows be near.
O while I've a shilling I will not fail
To drown my cares in a jug of ale,
Drown my cares in a jug of ale!

This song is very unjustly confounded by some commentators with Mr. Lover's old Irish song, The Jug of Punch. As to the lines in it, which somewhat resemble those in The Winter's Tale, there can be no doubt that Shakespeare stole them. Our copy of The Jug of Ale dates back to at least 1520, and is generally attributed to Bishop Still, that convivial prelate, worthy descendant of earnest Walter Map's Bishop Golias, who wished "in taberna mori," and, what's worse, rhymed that disreputable wish with "angelorum chori." The Bishop Still we allude to, was the writer of the old farce comedy Gammer Gurton's Needle, which contained the bacchanalian chant,

I cannot eat but little meat,
My stomach is not good;
But sure I think that I can drink
With him that wears a hood.

That fine old song of The Ex-ale-tation of Ale, draws one of the earliest distinctions between beer and ale: a distinction still regarded in Somersetshire, Gloucestershire and Staffordshire, where ale is the common liquor and beer is the gentleman. The writer observes quaintly:

But now, as they say, beer bears it away,
The more is the pity, if right might prevail;
For with this same beer came up heresy here,
The old Catholick drink is a pot of good ale.

And in very deed, the hop's but a weed,
Brought over 'gainst law and here set to sale.
Would the law were renewed, and no more beer brewed,
But all good men betake them to a pot of good ale!

Too many, I wis, with their deaths proved this,
And therefore (if ancient records do not fail)
He that first brewed the hop was rewarded with rope,
And found his beer far more bitter than ale.

This is one of the earliest denunciations of the newly invented drink, flavoured with the Flemish hop, introduced in Henry the Eighth's time, and denounced at first by the physicians as unwholesome. The old English ale must

have been fresh and creamy, like that of the Bavarians now. Heresy and hops, according to the men of the old faith, came in together.

Where the vine would not grow, the barley rose, and shook its ears to soothe and solace man. The Egyptians drank their beer hundreds of centuries ago, and they drink it now. It is, however, what Beaumont would have called "a muddy drench," tasting too much of earth, and the malt retaining a scurvy touch of the dull hand that sowed it. Warriors under the feathery palms of Philæ, with the asps of Egypt on their helmets, and the vulture wings for their crests, quaffed that horrible beer. The Nile boatmen give it you still. It is whitish, thick, and sour, like the worst Belgian brew. At the foot of the Pyramids, with their backs to the hot stone blocks, the warriors of the Pharaohs drank that execrable tap; and with the bliss of ignorance no doubt discussed the various merits of the Barclay and Perkinses of Thebes and Edfou. That was the poor but improvable beverage which Joseph and his brethren quaffed, and which supported the Israelites at their toilsome tasks in those brick-fields whose fires have long gone out. It must have been tossed off in those tremendous Tombs of the Kings at Thebes, as the swarthy workmen rested after colouring their fourteenth room of hieroglyphics, and sat down to sup snugly upon onions just within the keen black shadow of the scorching doorway hewn square in the rock, waiting till the high priest himself came down at sunset, with all his fan-bearers, and harpers, and spearmen, to see the great alabaster sarcophagus fashioning for the king soon to be gathered to his fathers by natural causes and the help of a purple cushion or two. It was "beer" ("boozy" they call it now) that inspired the Egyptians when they tore pell-mell over the desert after the Israelites; beer that led them on to battle with the Romans, to keep the crown on Cleopatra's head; beer that—but, perhaps, as it was beer that led them to do all the good things they did, and all the evil, we may refer our readers for the rest of their deeds to Egyptian history.

There is no doubt that all the Scythian and Tartaric races brought from those great grassy plains, where they had tended their miles of sheep, bags of seeds from the huge tracts of corn they had raised, and also the knowledge how to brew from it a strong water, good for raising the spirits after battle, good after long rides of flight or pursuit, good to make Tartar men fierce and bold, but apt too, in over doses, to make Tartar men cruel, raving, bloodthirsty and mad. Pliny speaks of this corn wine as common in Gaul, Spain, and, indeed, all through the west of Europe. Pliny praises the Spaniards for making this beer so that it could be kept good a long time, and then appends his moral:

"So exquisite is the art of mankind in gratifying their vicious appetites that they have thus invented a method to make even water itself intoxicating."

Or does it prove only that nature has in every country provided a stimulus, harmless in moderation, which shall refresh weary nature, lessen exhaustion, and repair the losses produced by excitement, labour, and anxiety?

Isidore, describing the beverage of the ancient Britons, says:

"The grain is steeped in water and made to germinate, by which its spirits are excited and set at liberty; it is then dried and ground; after which it is infused in a certain quantity of water, which, being fermented, becomes a pleasant, warming, strengthening, and intoxicating liquor."

Our rude forefathers made beer of wheat, oats, and millet. The Picts, we believe, made a drink of heather, the secret of which perished in a general engagement which swept away the last of the race. At least, Sir Walter, who knew everything about the land of the heather, used to relate some such tradition with much gusto. Perhaps, after all, the Pict drink was only another form of whisky, and the alchemists did not discover aqua vitæ, and mistake it for the Elixir of Life, as generally reported, after all.

The Welsh, who fought against Edward and his mailed men, and went cheerfully to death, led by three thousand drunken harpers, playing madly The Men of Harlech, and Of a Noble Race was Shenkin, and those bare-legged sinewy Scotch who wrestled with the enemies of Bruce, Wallace, and the Douglas, had two kinds of ale: common ale and spiced ale. One of their old laws specifies:

"If a farmer have no mead he shall pay two casks of spiced ale, or four casks of common ale, for one cask of mead."

Wine was no doubt slow in reaching Wales, the purple casks of Gascon and Burgundian wine having to pass by too many a Norman gate to reach Wales often safely, or without paying heavy toll. Fed on bad beer, no wonder the Welshmen went down before the charge of the Norman knights.

Is beer as good as it used to be? Was it always the custom, when hops were dear, to add liquorice and black resin to give flavour, tone, and colour? Did molasses, raw grain, and sugar, often take the place of malt? Were brewers' chemists always as respectable, honest, above-board, and ingenious, as they now are?

If gentian, bitter wort root, marsh trefoil, and quassia, were used formerly instead of hops, we did not know it, and were therefore happy. We used to feel a kind of warmth after a draught of good ale, and never knew that it was derived from capsicum; or that the solid crest of froth came from the stimulating influence of salts of steel and copperas. Is it possible that the beer we used to quaff at Putney, after boating, and thought nectar, was made from flown malt, cocculus indicus, the bitter bean of St. Ignatius, tobacco, or the poisonous nux vomica? That sweet flavour was honey, that refreshing headyness carraway and coriander seeds, that effervescence jalap, that inde-

scribable something we used to fondly term "the strawberry flavour," was composed of ginger, grains of paradise, orange-peel, long pepper, opium, hartshorn shavings, marble dust, egg-shells, and oyster-shells (to check acidity), sub-carbonate of soda, magnesia, and potassa. Such was the liquor prepared for us, and called in brewers' advertisements, "a healthy, bright, exhilarating ale, gently stimulating the digestive organs of the dyspeptic and gratefully nourishing the strength of the robust."

Porter was invented in the year 1731, by a London brewer, named Harwood, who combined the flavours of "half-and-half," or "three threads," as it was then called, in a beverage which he was pleased to call "entire butt." The new combination took, in the city, among the "porters," and from its new patrons it obtained its name. Those brawny men with knots, all day resting their broad backs against the church walls, or on the tramp between Lombard-street and the Docks, patronised the brown refreshing drink, and found it gave them fresh heart to endure the curse of Cain. The demagogues of the crowd, the hard hitters from the shoulder, led the rabble to the same brown fountain; they too drank, were cheered, and smiled a gracious approval. The fan-tailed hats and wearers of obscure white stockings who took an interest in coals and the Newcastle trade on the shore of the Thames, very soon gave in their vote also, and a plumper was for the same black-brown liquid, so gently acid, so harmless, so invigorating.

But there are still vexatious antiquarians who declare that the honest liquor (honest at least in its youth) never derived its name from the brawny porters of London, but, on the contrary, derived it from Harwood's practice of having his new beverage *portered* or carried round to his customers' areas, in shining pewter pots in long covered racks; his pot-boys shouting "porter," to announce their auspicious arrival, as they rat-tat-tatted at the door. More than a century this brown, mantling liquor—thin, slightly watery, but pleasant and heartening — has gone frothing up in the pewter pots of London; and may it go frothing up for ever! Good porter should have fulness, potency, and flavour; it should not be thin and vinous, like good ale; for it is of humbler origin, has no blue blood in its veins, and is only a sort of cousin-german of that fat, merry, laughing knight, old Sir John Barleycorn. Good porter should be made from black-scorched malt, made from good sound barley, of a uniform chocolate colour. The burnt sugar contained in the scorched malt and the mucilage, imparts the odour to porter, and gives it its fine flavour and tenacity. The gluten in the wort is, however, destroyed by too long boiling. An eminent brewer says, "the general method of fermenting porter differs from the cool and gradual process so essential to preserve the flavour and richness of ale. Porter owes much of its tart and astringent flavour to a high rapid fermentation, which carries down the density without diminishing the high flavour drawn from the materials. The rapid process also suits the brown malt, which being less dense than that from pale, cannot support a vigorous fermentation, and the yeast being more rapidly thrown off, leaves the beer clear and durable."

One misfortune of porter is, that brewers often scorch their damaged malt, and so disguised use it for porter making.

We much regret that we are unable to give the exact date of the introduction of that fat potent liquid, stout. Still we can go pretty near the bull's eye, if we do not exactly touch its centre. As Mr. Kirkman, the biographer of Macklin, who died in 1797, at the age of one hundred and seven, particularly records the fact, that his hero drank only a sort of beer called "stout"—it was evidently not long instituted in 1767. Kirkman says:

"It had been his constant rule for a period of thirty years or upwards to visit a public-house called the Antelope, in White Hart-yard, Covent Garden, where his usual beverage was a pint of beer, called *stout*, which was made hot and sweetened with moist sugar almost to a syrup. This, he said, balmed his stomach and kept him from having any inward pains."

Pale ale—originally manufactured for India alone—has been an universal beverage for more than twenty years. It has more hops than malt in it, and was at first derided by stout drinkers, as a nauseous, insipid medicine. Tonic it might be, but more fit for people with no livers than for your good livers and bons camarades. Perhaps, however, even then, the busy age was growing more dyspeptic, for it soon woke up as it were from its tipsy dream of the miserable three-bottle days, and like Sly, stretched, yawned, and called for a pot of the smallest ale. The doctors, always rather valetudinarian in their notions, from being so shut up with invalids, were in raptures at the pleasant new tonic.

The new medicine was pronounced to be a cordial, warm, aperitive, digestive, diuretic, stomachic, and sudorific. It was an antispasmodic—its aromatic bitter was to restore the depraved appetite, and correct unwholesome nutriment, to promote digestion, and increase the nutritive value of all food.

The hops used for this light Indian beer, are of the dryest and lightest possible colour. The Farnhams, and Goldings, or the very best East Kents, are to be preferred. The hops were the chief ingredient, the brewers said, and they were everything. The timid and not unnatural question put by the public was—If so little malt is wanted for this new beer, we suppose it is going to be very cheap—say a penny a glass? Not it; it rose to twopence the half pint, fourpence the pint, eightpence the quart, Heaven knows what the cask!—just as if it were the strongest and most stalwart beer possible. There was no appeal; the trade persisted; and the public—poor patient

public—"sufferance is the badge of all their tribe"—had to fall prostrate, as usual, at the feet of Monopoly.

The age of beer is another question. Do we get our beer as old as it used to be? Common beer, brewed and vatted entire in the months of March and April, can be drunk the next spring. Beer brewed in October may need two seasons to bring it into condition; but then it is of a fine lasting quality. The alcohol, which is the strength and preservative essence of beer, will be in that October infusion, and also carbonic acid gas enough to give it pungency and brilliancy, and arm it against putrefying fermentation. It will not be ropy; it will sparkle clear in the glass; it will shine like amber; it will do a man good.

But we are, we fear, fallen on degenerate days. Who hears now, as in the brave old times (as far as beer goes), when, on the birth of an heir to the old manor house, a tun of strong steadfast beer was instantly prepared from the richest malt, and the rarest nosegay of Canterbury hops? No cost, or time, or, labour was spared in boiling the worts and locking it safely in the great Falstaff of an oak hogshead. There, it strengthened and strengthened and warmed and nestled, year after year, while the child began to walk, then to ride, then to slay the deer and hunt the fox, then to fight and woo, and walk in cap and gown, and, finally, come of age; and then at last, out to the castle green, the faithful tun was hauled from its dark abode and solemnly tapped; the young heir drinking his father's and mother's health in the first glass, and his tenantry's in the second; then came the dance round the Maypole, and the junketting, and the merriest feast at which a roast ox was ever devoured. That was something like ale—ale twenty-one years old—ale of worship—ale of experience; and Sly and Autolycus would come lurking about the edge of the festivity for their quiet share, you may depend upon it.

Of hops, the best are the Farnham, and those from round Canterbury. The Worcesters are mild and pleasant flavoured, the North Clays (Northamptonshire) rank, and chiefly used for strong store beer. Good hops are best at two months old. The Farnhams are most suitable for London ales and their imitations; the darker and more astringent Kents for store beer and porter. No chemical or vegetable bitter has yet been discovered to supersede the warm, stomachic, aromatic, and cheering bitter of the hop.

The best pure malt is light; but if the "cockspur" or shoot appear, it will turn poor and weak. It should be of equal colour and uniform size; hard and flinty malt is bad. It should easily bruise into a sweet white flour; the skin should be thin, the meal sweet and rich to the taste. An eminent brewer says:

"The test in common use is to put a handful of malt into a glass of cold water; the flints or unmalted grain will sink to the bottom; those partially made will dip obliquely in angles of depression corresponding to their imperfection; while the thoroughly malted seeds will swim and float for several hours before they absorb sufficient water to precipitate them. Experience will, however, enable the eye, the teeth, and the palate to determine with some accuracy the quality of malt, though the ultimate and best test of productiveness is the saccharometer."

Beer contains what barley contains, or rather what malt (barley chemically treated) contains, *i.e.*, starch, sugar, farina, mucilage, gluten, bitter and extractive. Malting is, in fact, one long chemical process of digestion, succeeding three months sweating in the stack that the barley has previously undergone. It is to feed the young plant that nature reserves all the choicest saccharine juices of the seed. The maltster, therefore, wise and wily, contrives a spurious growth of the plant, in order to obtain these precious juices, and to turn all its starches into sugar. It is first steeped in water for from forty to sixty-eight hours. It is then drained and thrown into a couch to ferment. The heat is then checked, and germination encouraged after the sixth day. The grain then begins to swell, heat, and decompose, as it would in the moist earth, the radicle shoots forth, the acrospire swells and grows beneath the husk, and in a few days the farinaceous matter round the root becomes friable and sweet.

Germinisation and saccharisation continue till about the fourteenth day, when the moisture decreases, and the particles turn to meal. That is the moment the ever watchful and wily maltster chooses. To check waste and preserve the sweetness, he dries the grain in a kiln, and evaporates it to dryness. The malt is sweet and mucilaginous, but if the germination had continued, all the starch would have turned into sugar, and passed into the juices of the young plant for whose necessities it was originally intended.

The use of beer has very much increased of late years in Paris. In 1805, a writer in the Almanac des Gourmands says: "At this moment there are only two places in Paris where you are perfectly sure of getting good beer, 'un faiencier de la rue de l'Arbre Sec, et dans le petit café Flamand de la rue Saint Louis Saint Honoré." The French at this time had strange, timid, heretical, notions about beer. They thought it chilled the stomach and retarded digestion. They considered white beer as less nutritious than red, but lighter and more wholesome; they also insisted on a coup de milieu, or middle dinner dram, to correct the heaviness and coldness of the new beverage. Yet even at this time the number of brewers in Paris had wonderfully increased since the Revolution. One of the chief of these was M. Santerre de la Fontinelle, in the Rue Neuve de Berry. He was the brother of that "General Frothy" (Mousseux), as he was wittily called by the Parisian gamins, who bade his drums beat louder to drown the remonstrances of

Louis the Sixteenth at the scaffold. According to report,

Le general n'avait de Mars que la bière.

But what a change now! All day long, on the marble tables at every café door in summer, you see glass jugs full of the amber-coloured beer of Strasbourg. Beer of the Teuton has all but driven away the Celtic raspberry syrup and water, of former years. The change has come on Paris, as changes of diet do come upon a nation. They are fashions. They are not founded on deductions of the judgment. They originate, no one knows why; they lead, no one knows where. They may save thousands, or kill thousands—no one heeds. The fresh creamy beer may be better than the clogging syrup, but it is headier and more bilious, and we very much doubt whether it is so wholesome in so hot a climate, and among a people who take so much less exercise for its own sake, than we Englishmen do. In Paris, this German beer always tastes to us less digestible, and more heavy, apoplectic, and clogging, than in England. Howbeit, change must come. The planets are in the Liberal interest; the sea ebbs and flows; raspberry syrup had its day.

THE BABES IN THE CLOUDS.

AN AMERICAN TRUE STORY.

Just ten years ago, there suddenly burst upon the western world, a magnificent stranger from foreign parts, "with all his travelling glories on." It was the great comet of 1858, on the grand tour of the universe.

It seemed strange that petty human life could go on as usual, with its eating and drinking, toiling, trafficking, and pleasuring, while that "flaming minister," on his billion-leagued circuit, was preaching the wonders of infinite immensity and power, and the nothingness of earth. But science has robbed celestial apparitions of their old portentous significance. The comet no longer runs his kindling race, like Vich-Alpine's henchman, with his fiery cross, announcing war and disaster,

Herald of battle, fate, and fear.

He is on his own business; not ours.

Under the tail of this particular comet doubtless many a tale of love was told—in the light of his swift splendours many a tender look exchanged. The astronomer coolly swept the starry field with his glass, unawed by the irregular night-guard patrolling the heavens, and the robber and murderer disdained the awful witness. He left us as he found us—joined to our mortal idols—wise in our own conceit, weak, and worldly, and wicked, but no castaways of the universe after all.

We remember that comet-summer, not so much for its great astronomical event, as for two singular incidents that more nearly touched our human sympathies, which *will* grovel in poor earthly affairs, even within sight of the most august celestial phenomena.

One pleasant Saturday afternoon during the comet's appearance, an aëronaut, after a prosperous voyage, descended upon a farm in the neighbourhood of a large market town, in one of the western states. He was soon surrounded by a curious group of the farmer's family and labourers, all asking eager questions about the voyage and the management of the balloon. That, secured by an anchor and a rope in the hand of the aëronaut, its car but a foot or two above the ground, was swaying lazily backward and forward in the evening air. It was a good deal out of wind, and was a sleepy and innocent monster in the eyes of the farmer, who, with the owner's permission, led it up to his house, where, as he said, he could "hitch it" to his fence. But before he thus secured it, his three children, aged respectively ten, eight, and three, begged him to lift them "into that big basket," that they might sit on "those pretty red cushions." While the attention of the aëronaut was diverted by more curious questioners from a neighbouring farm, this rash father lifted his darlings one by one into the car. Chubby little Johnny proved the "ounce too much" for the aërial camel, and brought him to the ground; and then, unluckily, not the baby, but the eldest hope of the family, was lifted out. The relief was too great for the monster. The volatile creature's spirits rose at once, he jerked his halter out of the farmer's hand, and with a wild bound mounted into the air! Vain was the aëronaut's anchor. It caught for a moment in a fence, but it tore away, and was off, dangling uselessly after the runaway balloon, which so swifty and steadily rose that in a few minutes those two little white faces peering over the edge of the car grew indistinct, and those piteous cries of "Papa!" "Mamma!" grew faint and fainter, up in the air.

When distance and twilight mists had swallowed up voices and faces, and nothing could be seen but that dark cruel shape, sailing triumphantly away, with its precious booty, like an aërial privateer, the poor father sank down helpless and speechless; but the mother, frantic with grief, still stretched her yearning arms toward the inexorable heavens, and called wildly up into the unanswering void.

The aëronaut strove to console the wretched parents with assurances that the balloon would descend within thirty miles of the town, and that all might be well with the children, provided it did not come down in water, or in deep woods. In the event of its descending in a favourable spot, there was but one danger to be apprehended; he thought that the elder child might step out, leaving the younger in the balloon. Then, it might again rise, and continue its voyage.

"Ah no," replied the mother, "Jennie would never stir from the car, without Johnnie in her arms!"

The balloon passed directly over the market town, and the children seeing many people in the streets, stretched out their hands and cried loudly for help. But the villagers though they saw the bright little heads, heard no call.

Amazed at the strange apparition, they might almost have thought the translated little creatures small angel navigators on some voyage of discovery, some little cherubic venture of their own, as, heading toward the rosy cloud-lands and purple islands of sunset splendour, they sailed deeper and deeper into the west, and faded away.

Some company they had, poor little sky-waifs! Something comforted them, and allayed their wild terrors—something whispered them that below the night and clouds, was home; that above was God; that wherever they might drift or clash, living or dead, they would still be in His domain, and under His care—that though borne away among the stars, they could not be lost, for His love would follow them.

When the sunlight all went away, and the great comet came blazing out, little Johnnie was apprehensive that the comet might come too near their airy craft, and set it on fire with a whisk of its dreadful tail. But when his sister assured him that that fiery dragon was "as much as twenty miles away," and that God wouldn't let him hurt them, he was tranquillized, but soon afterward, said, "I wish he would come a little nearer, so I could warm myself—I'm so cold!"

Then Jennie took off her apron, and wrapped it about the child, saying tenderly: "This is all sister has to make you warm, darling, but she'll hug you close in her arms, and we will say our prayers and you shall go to sleep."

"Why, how can I say my prayers, before I have my supper?" asked little Johnnie.

"Sister hasn't any supper for you, or for herself, but we must pray all the harder," solemnly responded Jennie.

So the two baby-wanderers, alone in the wide heavens, unawed by darkness, immensity, and silence, by the presence of the great comet and the millions of unpitying stars, lifted their little clasped hands, and sobbed out their sorrowful, "Our Father," and then that quaint little supplementary prayer:

> Now I lay me down to sleep,
> I pray the Lord my soul to keep,
> If I should die before I wake,
> I pray the Lord my soul to take.

"There! God heard that, easy; for we are close to Him, up here," said innocent little Johnnie.

Doubtless Divine Love stooped to the little ones, and folded them in perfect peace—for soon the younger, sitting on the bottom of the car, with his head leaning against his sister's knee, slept as soundly as though he were lying in his own little bed, at home; while the elder watched quietly through the long, long hours, and the car floated gently on in the still night air, till it began to sway and rock on the fresh morning wind.

Who can divine that simple little child's thoughts, speculations, and wild imaginings, while watching through those hours? She may have feared coming in collision with a meteor—for many were abroad that night, scouts and heralds of the great comet—or perhaps being cast away on some desolate star-island, or more dreary still, floating and floating on, night and day, till they should both die of cold and hunger. Poor babes in the clouds!

At length, a happy chance, or Providence—we will say Providence—guided the little girl's wandering hand to a cord connected with the valve; something told her to pull it. At once the balloon began to sink, slowly and gently, as though let down by tender hands; or as though some celestial pilot guided it through the wild currents of air, not letting it drop into lake, or river, lofty wood, or impenetrable swamp, where this strange unchild-like experience might have been closed by a death of unspeakable horror; but causing it to descend as softly as a bird alights, on a spot where human care and pity awaited it.

The sun had not yet risen, but the morning twilight had come, when the little girl looking over the edge of the car, saw the dear old earth coming nearer—"rising towards them," she said. But when the car stopped, to her great disappointment, it was not on the ground, but caught fast in the topmost branches of a tree. Yet she saw they were near a house whence help might soon come, so she awakened her brother and told him the good news, and together they watched and waited for deliverance, hugging each other for joy and for warmth; for they were very cold.

Farmer Burton, who lived in a lonely house, on the edge of his own private prairie, was a famous sleeper in general, but on this particular morning he awoke before the dawn, and, though he turned and turned again, he could sleep no more. So, at last, he said to his good wife, whom he had kindly awakened to inform her of his unaccountable insomnolence, "It's no use; I'll just get up and dress, and have a look at the comet."

The next that worthy woman heard from her wakeful spouse, was a frightened summons to the outer door. It seems, that no sooner did he step forth from his house, than his eyes fell on a strange portentous shape hanging in a large pear-tree, about twenty yards distant. He could see in it no likeness to anything earthly, and he half fancied it might be the comet, who having put out his light, had come down there to perch. In his fright and perplexity, he did what every wise man would do in a like extremity; he called on his valiant wife. Reinforced by her, he drew near the tree, cautiously reconnoitring. Surely never pear-tree bore such fruit!

Suddenly there descended from the thing, a plaintive trembling little voice. "Please take us down. We are very cold!"

Then a second little voice. "And hungry, too. Please take us down!"

"Why, who are you? And where are you?"

The first little voice said: "We are Mr. Harwood's little boy and girl, and we are lost in a balloon."

The second little voice said: "It's us, and we

runned away with a balloon. Please take us down."

Dimly comprehending the situation, the farmer getting hold of a dangling rope, succeeded in pulling down the balloon.

He first lifted out little Johnnie, who ran rapidly a few yards toward the house, then turned round, and stood for a few moments, curiously surveying the balloon. The faithful little sister was so chilled and exhausted that she had to be carried into the house, where, trembling and sobbing, she told her wonderful story.

Before sunrise a mounted messenger was dispatched to the Harwood home, with glad tidings of great joy. He reached it in the afternoon, and a few hours later the children themselves arrived, in state, with banners and music, and conveyed in a covered hay-waggon and four.

Joy-bells were rung in the neighbouring town, and in the farmer's brown house, the happiest family on the Continent thanked God that night.

It would seem that this comet had some occult maddening influence on balloons, for during its appearance there occurred in another western state, an involuntary ascension, similar to the one I have related; but more tragical in its termination.

An aëronaut while, if I remember rightly, repairing the net-work of his balloon, was seated on a slight wooden cross-piece, suspended under it; the car having been removed, and the balloon being held in its position, a few feet from the ground, by merely a rope in the hand of an assistant. From a too careless grasp, this rope escaped, and in an instant the gigantic bubble shot upward, carrying the aëronaut on his frail support; a rider more helpless than Mazeppa bound to his Ukraine steed; a voyager more hopeless than a shipwrecked sailor afloat on a spar in mid-ocean.

The balloon rose rapidly, but unsteadily, swaying and pitching in the evening wind. As long as it remained in sight, the form of the aëronaut could be distinguished, swinging beneath it. And, as he was known to be a man of uncommon nerve and presence of mind, it was hoped that even from his dizzy perch he might manage to operate on the valve, or at least to puncture a small hole in the balloon, and thus effect a descent. But such efforts, if he made any, were vain, as, for many days and nights, there was anxious inquiry and patient search over a wide extent of country, with no result. We gave him up. Only wifely love hoped on, and looked and waited. At last, in a wild spot, the wreck of the balloon was found, and that was all. Still, wifely love hoped on, until, a month or two later, some children nutting in a wood, many miles away from where the balloon was found, discovered, half buried in the ground, a strange dark mass, that looked like a heap of old clothes, but that there was a something, shapeless and fearful, holding it together.

It was thought that the aëronaut parted company from his balloon by loosening his hold on the cords above him, in desperate efforts to open the valve; but he may, after whirling in swift vortices, or plunging and mounting through cloudy abysses of air, have become unnerved by the awful silence of the upper night, by the comet's fearful companionship, by whelming immensity and infinity, and wearily let go his hold, to drop earthward.

MEPHISTOPHELES, GENERAL DEALER.

WHO'LL buy tresses, bonnie brown tresses?
Maids and matrons, come and buy!
Here is one that was cut from a beggar
Crouching low down in a ditch to die!
Look at it, countess! envy it, duchess!
'Tis long and fine, and will suit you well;
Hers by nature, yours by purchase,
Beauty was only made to sell.

Who'll buy hair of lustrous yellow?
Maids and matrons, 'tis bright as gold,
'Twas shorn from the head of a wretched pauper
Starving with hunger and bitter cold.
It brought her a supper, a bed, and a breakfast;
Buy it, fair ladies, whose locks are thin,
'Twill help to cheat the silly lovers
Who care not for heads that have brains within.

Who'll buy tresses, jet-black tresses?
Maids and matrons, lose no time!
These raven locks, so sleek and glossy,
Belonged to a murderess red with crime.
The hangman's perquisite;—worth a guinea!
Wear them, and flaunt them, good *ma dame;*
They'll make you look a little younger;—
She was reality, *you* are a sham!

Who'll buy tresses, snow-white tresses?
Widows and matrons whose blood is cold,
Buy them and wear them, and show the scorners
You're not ashamed of growing old.
The face and the wig should pull together,
We all decay, but we need not *dye*;
But age as well as youth needs helping,
Snow-white tresses come and buy!

Who'll buy hair of all shades and colours,
For masquerade and false pretence?
Padding, and make-believe, and swindle
That never deceive a man of sense!
Chignons! chignons! lovely chignons!
'Tis art, not nature, wins the day—
False hair, false hips, false hearts, false faces!
Marry them, boobies, for you may!

FAR-WESTERN NEWSPAPERS.

THERE is not a town anywhere in the West of sufficient importance to be "reckoned a right smart chance of a city" without a local weekly, bi-weekly, or even daily newspaper. As it is impossible for the whole community to be of one mind in matters political, we generally find one devoted to the interests of the democratic party, and a second to the well cherished opinions of the republicans—these two parties dividing social affairs and public and private life in "the Far West."

Now, what do I mean by the Far West: a term often used, but with a most indefinite application? About New York, the term is applied to the region of which Chicago is the centre. If you go to Chicago you will find that the railway companies are advertising the "Far West" as Omaha. At Omaha, on the Missouri, Utah seems to be that bourne: while, again, at the city of the saints it is Oregon, or California,—somewhere about the Pacific at all events. Whether the people of the Pacific coast have any place where they "locate" the "Far West," it is hard to say; probably China and Japan would be about the nearest whereabout of that geographically-relative locality. The scene of the following sketches will lie, broadly speaking, in the region on either side of the Rocky Mountains; somewhere in the wilds of those new states and territories which are now and again springing up out of the wilderness; which are peopled by an ever moving and adventurous people, not by any means barbarous, yet far from refined — in fact, of that peculiar type known well enough in those parts of the world as the "western man." It is with the ruder type of newspaper, produced in such out-of-the-way places as lie within the shadow of the Rocky Mountains, the Sierra Nevadas of California, or the Cascade Mountains of Oregon or Idaho, with their characteristics, and with their humour, that I propose to deal.

The flourishing state of ephemeral literature on the shores of the Pacific (associated as it will ever be in our minds with bowie knives and nuggets), cannot be better expressed than by stating, that in the city of San Francisco alone, numbering one hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants, and nineteen years ago consisting of only a few cotton tents on some sand-hills, there are published no fewer than forty-five periodicals, comprising ten dailies, eight monthlies, one semi-weekly, one tri-weekly, and two annuals. Of these, three are published in the German language, three in Spanish, and two in French. The gold of California has attracted men clever in every department of brain and handicraft, and, accordingly, we find these periodicals edited with good ability and even refinement. It is only when we get up in the interior that we find the western editor in all his crudity. Suppose that it should ever fall to the lot of a wise man of the East to ride some summer day into one of these quiet little western towns, situated on a prairie or by some river with a not euphonious name, where it is difficult to say when the town commences and the country ends, or which is which, and where the inhabitants, in their dolce far niente languor, seem to wish, like the lotus eaters, as they tilt their rocking chairs on the shady side of the street, in front of the "grocery" door, that "it was always afternoon." Before he has well taken off his jingling Mexican spurs, or imbibed a preliminary "drink" with the landlord of the "Ho-tel," he will be accosted by a shabby-genteel individual whom, by the shrewdly telling questions he puts, the traveller will have no difficulty in recognising as the local editor. If he has not done so already himself, Colonel Homer S. Smith, mine host, will soon take upon himself a western landlord's privilege, of introducing you to "Dr.," "Captain," "Judge," or "Mister Ossian E. Dodge, editor of the Swampville Flag of Liberty (and one of our most distinguished citizens, sir)." If he be not of the same way of thinking in political matters, it is immaterial, for this civility will only be delayed a few minutes until the opposition editor, from across the way, makes his appearance in his shirt sleeves to take his meridian "cocktail," and to squeeze out of the new arrival all the public news he may possess for the public good (in a professional way), or, true to his country, matters of private history for his own private satisfaction.

As you get better acquainted with your friend you will find that he is far from being such a truculent fellow as his leaders and "personal items" might lead you to suppose. He will hospitably ask you to "come up to my office, Cap.; write your letters there, sir;" and when you look into his office, which is generally press room, composing room, and study, with little furniture beyond a saliva-rusted stove, a spittoon, and a huge rocking chair of cheap construction, you will find that it seems to be a general loafing place for the more idle of the citizens of the political opinions which the "Flag" professes. There they are, all smoking, chewing tobacco, eating apples, or ruminating with chair tilted back, or sitting on the step in front of the office door, only occasionally moving over to the neighbouring bar room to "put in a blast," or "to hist in a drop o' pisin." The editor will now and then, if not better employed, rush out to ask a passing acquaintance "if he has not such a thing as an *item* about him," or will bolt round the corner of the street to pump a rusty gold miner who has just now wearily trudged into town for the week's supply of pork and beans. Shortly afterwards, you will see the two adjourning to "take a drink;" or, if news from the diggings at "Mad Mule Cañon," or "Shirt Tail Bar,"* is of a particularly spicy character; the miner will adjourn to the office. There his news will be "set up" in due course, and he will be invited to "take a char," doubtless not only in hospitality, but also with eye to the policy of keeping him out of the way of the "opposition," already on the qui vive; for in these dull, die-away mining or rural villages in some mountain valley of the Far West, a man with news is an important personage, and comports himself (most properly) as one from cities. The telegraph and the mail may bring matters of general interest to all alike, but the local items of a "difficulty" down at Greaser's Camp or a gold "strike" in Black Jack's Claim at Yuba Dam* are matters

* Well-known mining localities in California.

which must be picked up by that most industrious individual, the "local" editor, or as he is called in other places, "reporter." If the paper is going to press, and there is a dearth of "items" under the column "local," there is nothing for it but to extemporise some, or resort to that unfailing remedy of a newsless editor, write letters on local grievances to himself, and answer them in the next issue. In many years' wanderings about the less settled portions of the slopes of the Rocky Mountains I have had much intercourse—pleasant, on the whole—with the western editor. Scattered through my note-books are various memoranda illustrative of these rough "spurtings" of literary effort in a roughly organised state of society. The editor works to please the public, and from the paper can generally be drawn a tolerably fair picture of the community for which it is produced, tinctured, of course, with more or less of the individual peculiarities of the presiding spirit. I must, in honesty, explain that no one need expect in a few glances over a single file of western newspapers to find so many strongly marked characteristics as occur, within narrow limits, in a gathering like mine; for that contains picked specimens culled at wide intervals. On the other hand, I can assert that as they were not gathered with any special object in view, they are fairly representative, and in no case is there the slightest exaggeration.

The editor himself has generally been brought up as a printer, and not unfrequently in case of accident will "set up" and "work off" his own leader. Not unfrequently "he puts in his time at case;" and if he be of a speculative turn of mind, drives the stage coach, or "runs" the hotel; but oftener, he is a local attorney, filling up his spare time with politics, and possibly sits in the territorial legislature. There is not, I believe, a politician of any eminence in this wise, who at one time or other has not been a printer or a lawyer: the former generally graduating into the latter, as the world deals more kindly with him or ambition pricks him on. He very seldom sticks to the editorial desk, but gravitates with western versatility into some other more lucrative line of business. If he be sufficiently talkative, he takes to politics, and "runs" for the local legislature or the district judgeship; or, if muscularly inclined, you will find him working in a mining claim, or engaged in fulfilling a contract to "blaze" a trail.

The first thing which attracts attention in the little dirty-looking, ill-printed sheet, is its astounding personality; that personality being generally not so much directed against the other party, or even against the rival paper as representing the other party, as against the editor of it in his private capacity. Every western editor's name is prominently printed at the head of his paper, and instead of talking as he of the Eatanswill Gazette might, of our "contemptible contemporary the Journal," the Western paper talks of "that low-lived hound, Cephas E. Slocum, who edits the miserable two-bit thing* over the way."

The editor of a San Jose paper quarrels with another editor. Listen to his description of his friend's character: "He is a professional loafer, and may generally be seen round drinking saloons, not only at election times, but for years after. He makes a game of politics, and plays as he would a game of short cards or cut throat monte to win. He wears his hair short—a style known as the 'fighting cut'—that he may be always ready for a scrimmage, and that his adversary may take no undue advantage. The preponderance of his brains is located between his ears. His countenance is concave, and one or both of his eyes are usually in 'mourning' from the effects of his last fight. He is 'powerful' in 'primaries,' where he votes early and *often* for his favourite candidates, succeeds and calls the nomination *regular*. In the matter of piety, long prayers, &c., that is entirely out of his line. Cursing is more especially his forte. He can tell the difference between a whisky straight and a gin cocktail with his eyes shut, and can snuff a treat two blocks off. He spends his money with ——, and makes it a point of honour never to pay an honest debt. He accepts office for the sake of the *stealings*, and is loyal because it pays best!"

There is no joke here; the man is perfectly in earnest, as none who knew the pair of worthies would for a moment doubt. Nothing can more thoroughly express this personality, as well as the absolute dearth of local news in a mountain newspaper in Nevada, than the following from the Virginia Enterprize: "We observe that Brier, local† of the News, has on a new coat. If we remember right, there was a dry goods store burnt out a short time ago, and that a number of coats which were put on the street for safe keeping, after having been saved from the fire, were missing. Of course we don't intend to cast any reflection, or to say that Brier nipped any of them. Oh no!" Another indignantly states that it "would take the auger of common sense longer to pierce into a certain editor's brain than it would take for a boiled carrot to bore through the Alps." After this elegant burst of eloquence, we may be prepared to learn that William T. Dowdall, an Illinois editor, having "read" Brick Pomeroy out of the democratic party; the latter replies by calling Dowdall an "idiotic swill-headed chunk;" whereupon Dowdall calls Brick a "Pandemoniac paste-pot cut-throat." The editor of the Oakland News offers a handsome apology to the editor of his San Leandro contemporary for a *typographical* error in calling him a "*m*onkey;" he meant a "*d*onkey!" Sometimes these personal

* One bit (fivepence to sevenpence), and two bits (one shilling), being about the ordinary price of a single newspaper to the west of the Rocky Mountains: the former is the lowest coin in general circulation. However, if taken by the week, the usual subscription for a daily paper is only one shilling, delivered.

† i.e., local editor, or reporter.

pen-battles are a little more truculent. There is a well-known editor "out west," of the name of Prentice. Prentice is never known to be put out; and accordingly Mr. Smith (we shall call him), of the Cleavland Plain Dealer, made a fatal mistake when he penned the following: "Prentice *is a liar*, and we shall tell him so when we meet him!" Prentice thus replies in his next paper: "Ah! Will you, Mr. Smith? About that time there will be a *funeral*, and the *Smith family will be the principal mourners!*"

The following is more in the highly jocose way, and coming from a village in the vicinity of San Francisco, is characteristic enough. "*Wanted, a calaboose.** M'Quillan, of the Parajo Times, is earnestly petitioning the board of supervisors for a calaboose, which institution, he argues, is sadly wanted in the town of Watsonville. We once spent a week in Watsonville, and we have no hesitation in saying that M'Quillan's head is quite level on the calaboose question. A calaboose *is* sadly needed in that locality." So says the Dramatic Chronicle; to which the editor pointedly referred to as "M'Quillan," replies in parenthesis at the end of a reprint: ["Yes, we remember your visit here, which suggested to us the necessity of a calaboose."] My friend, the Hon. W. P. H., is well known in North-West America as the active superintendent of Indian affairs in Oregon, and was at one time editor, and is still proprietor, of the Oregon Statesman. On one of his tours, he captured the wives of the great war chief, Pahnine, of the Shoshones, who had for eight years waged continual war against the whites, accompanied with most merciless outrages. These women were held as hostages, and the result was that in the ensuing summer the chief sued for peace, and Mr. H., with the officers of the Indian department, and a party of friends, of which the writer of these pages formed one, journeyed along the region of the Snake River to deliver them up in state. Our astonishment was great, to find our doings subsequently recorded in the opposition paper as follows: "Bill H., editor of the Statesman, went up Snake River, last week, with three squaws," the notion evidently being to lead those at a distance who did not know the official character of the journey to suppose that "Bill H." was a person of very immoral life, who consorted in trigamic concubinage with aboriginal ladies, and that the Statesman must be a vile paper to have such an editor.

Some years ago I passed an evening at the Dalles of the Columbia River: a locality well known to all readers of early adventure beyond the Rocky Mountains. It is now a little village ("city," of course, they call it) on the highway to the mines of Idaho. It was crowded on this particular night with travellers. Among the motley throng, were various newspaper men bound to the mines, either to canvass for their papers, correspond, or generally to look around. Among others, I was introduced to an exceedingly pleasant gentleman called Mr Samuel Bowers, editor of a Portland paper. He was an excellent fellow, affable and pleasant, and, after the manners and customs of the country, we had many "drinks" together. I believe we engaged to correspond. What was my delight when the Dalles Mountaineer, the weekly paper, came out next morning to find the following anent my friend of the evening before, who was now on his way up the Columbia River: "*Miners look out!* Among other rogues, thieves, cut-throats, rowdies, and blackguards generally, whom we noticed in the city last night was Sam Bowers, who has figured in the rôle of newspaper editor, school-fund thief, etcetera. We believe that he is on his way to the mines, in which case the honest miners had better look sharp, *else Sam will bilk them*—SURE!" I expressed a little surprise to the friend who had introduced me. "Oh," was the reply, "that's nothing. Sam, perhaps, ain't much on the pray, but still he's not such a bad coon; but he differs in politics with the folks in this quarter. Watch the Umatilla and other up-river papers, and see what they say." I did watch them, with this result, that the paper in the next village on the river, above the Dalles (after a fashion very common in the western newspapers—I suppose for the sake of filling up) copied out the item, with the commentary: "Sam passed through here the other day—*nothing missing!*" To which the next weekly adds, "Sam passed through here on Thursday, but as far as we can learn without injury to the portable property of any of our citizens. There *was* talk about a child's rattle and a red-hot stove, but we believe the rumour was without foundation." So, another editor apologises to another for calling him a miserable *thing*—he meant a *nothing;* and the editor of the Solano Press calls his brother of the Herald "an absurd ass, a contemptible cur, a dirty dog, and a liar." Equally parliamentary is the language of the Oregon Statesman in reference to a contemporary: "We republish to-day a vile, degraded, infamous, and execrably atrocious lie from the columns of the Daily Oregonian. Next week, when time and space will permit, we shall reply to it. For the present, suffice it for the low, vulgar, foul-mouthed, and unrefined hound to know that our eye is upon him, and he cannot escape us." The Solano Press is apparently of a "fierce nostril" and anxious for a fight. Woe betide the unfortunate wight who differs with it in opinion—even though the opinion be not political, but on the serious business of the best route to a certain mining locality. I remember a newspaper correspondent (as harmless a man as need be, I well know) who ventured to hint that there was a better route to the Idaho mines than by passing up the Columbia. His advice, if followed, would be to the detriment of the Columbia River towns. With what unanimity was he abused! No attempt was made at argument: it was the old endorse-

* Jail.

ment of the brief, "No defence; abuse plaintiff's attorney." The Oregonian suggested that "Some charitable packer* had given him the privilege of riding the 'Bell mare,' and had generously offered him a blanket to cover his miserable carcase." The last I heard of this unfortunate young man was the suggestion of the Umatilla Tri-weekly Advertiser: "That the flunkey must have lingered along the road scouring knives and washing dishes. That he never paid for a meal is evident from his statement of the prices charged," &c., &c. Here below is a piece of fine writing from an editorial in a Californian mining paper: "Let vagabonds howl and traitors hiss; let the breeders of bloodhounds to track and tear Union refugees bay like their own dogs; let the smitten maniacs who cursed Johnson till he turned traitor, also vomit new blasphemies against the holy name of liberty; let foul lust, and lazy pride, and insolent and testy spleen, and self-conscious envy and gleaming hate, and blear-eyed prejudice, and besotted ignorance, and porcine brutality stir every cesspool with their assinine vociferations till every club-room of Democracy reeks like an omnium gatherum of stenches!"

I regret to say that many of these gems of far-western periodical literature are occasionally not only scurrilous on the individual attacked, but verge on the sacred precincts of the family circle: holding up to public scorn the foibles and weakness of the female members of the family of the individual attacked, and even occasionally being so openly coarse and indecent as to preclude their being noticed in this place. Probably, no one likes, when "running" for the honourable office of congressman or supreme state judge, to have it shown in a newspaper how, in an early portion of his career, he murdered his grandmother, and ignominiously buried her in the back kitchen. Mr. "Artemus Ward," himself a quondam "newspaper man," has exactly struck this nail on the head when he represents in the "controversy about a plank road," this attack upon the editor of the Eagle of Freedom. The passage is worth quoting as an epitome of a system:

"The road may be, as our contemporary says, a humbug; but *our* aunt isn't baldheaded, and *we* hav'nt got a one-eyed sister Sal! Wonder if the editor of the Eagle of Freedom sees it. This used up the Eagle of Freedom feller, because his aunt's head does present a skinned appearance, and his sister Sarah is very much one-eyed. . . . . We have recently put up in our office an entirely new sink, of unique construction, with two holes, through which the soiled water may pass to the new bucket underneath. What will the Hell hounds of the Advertiser say to this? We shall continue to make improvements as fast as our rapidly increasing business may warrant. Wonder whether a certain editor's wife thinks she can palm off a brass watch-chain on the community for a gold one."

A paper in Vancouver Island used to style its evening contemporary "the night cart."

Though a vast portion of a western newspaper might, without a very great stretch of adverse criticism, be styled *personal*, yet, by emphasis, in the "local item" column, you can see every now and then paragraphs entitled "Personal." These paragraphs refer to the business of private individuals in contradistinction to others relating to the public weal. What they are, may be judged by the following "personal" welcoming home of a prominent citizen:

"Mr. Joe Tritch arrived home last night with the stage. He has on a new suit of State clothes, including a fine plug hat. He looks the dogondest cuss ever since Jim Ford left; but, nevertheless, we are glad to see him, and hope he will settle down, and behave himself."

The following is peculiarly national in its curiosity:

"Nathan E. Wallace and Charlie Henry went up to Fort Langely last night—business *unknown*."

As might be expected, such personalities occasionally lead to hostile encounters between rival editors and their readers. Most frequently these consist only in a thrashing on either side, and I fancy very few western editors have missed having a difficulty of that sort at one time or another on their hands. I possess a scrap-book kept by Mr. B. Griffin, of Victoria, in the earlier years of California, and such items as the following are not unfrequent: "Collision between H. A. De Courcey, Esq., editor of the Calaveras Chronicle, and Mr. W. H. Carter;" "Affair of honour between W. H. Jones and Salucius T. Slingsby;" "Editorial Difficulty down at Santa Clara—Man Shot," &c. John King, of William, editor of the San Francisco Herald, was shot by a rowdy, whom he had attacked in his paper. His death may be said to have been the origin of the Vigilance Committee, which, with a lawless justice, created comparative peace and order where anarchy and villany had reigned. I heard a story about a new editor who had come to a place which was infested with a gang of ruffians. Before his face was generally known, he attacked those men most violently in his paper. One day, as he was sitting in his office after having published a particularly severe article, a stalwart individual, brandishing a whip in his hand, rushed in and inquired for the editor. Suspecting evil, he asked the visitor to be seated, and he would call the editor, who had just stepped out for a minute. On his way down-stairs he met a second individual carrying a bludgeon, and likewise inquiring vigorously for the editor. "Oh, sir, he is sitting in his office up-stairs. You'll find him there." When he next peeped into the office, the two were belabouring each other thoroughly, rolling over and over, and each fancying that he had the editor in hand. I

* Muleteer, who "packs" or carries goods to the mines or elsewhere.

tell the story for what it is worth; and do not pretend to guarantee its exact truth.

Doolittle, a Southern editor, held his post for six months, and in that time was stabbed twice, shot three times, belaboured with a bludgeon once, thrown into a pond once, *but was never kicked.* During his six months' experience he killed two of his adversaries. All these are absolute facts. When Isaac Disraeli wrote the Quarrels and Calamities of Authors, he must assuredly have known nothing of western newspaper life, otherwise a chapter ought to have been added to both books. As a set-off, the "local" of the Memphis Bulletin jestingly sums up his year's experience as follows:

	Times.
Been asked to drink	11,393
Drank	11,392
Requested to retract	416
Didn't retract	416
Invited to parties, receptions, presentations, &c., by people fishing for puffs	3,333
Took the hint	33
Didn't take the hint	3,300
Threatened to be whipped	174
Been whipped	0
Didn't come to time	170
Been promised bottles of champagne, whisky, brandy, gin, bitters, &c., if I would go after them	3,650
Been after them	0
Going again	0
Been asked, "What's the news?"	300,000
Told	13
Didn't know	200,000
Lied about it	90,987
Been to church	2
Changed politics	32
Expected to change still	33
Gave for charity	$ 5 00
Gave for a terrier dog	23 00
Cash on hand	00 00

Everybody advertises in the West, professional men as well as tradesmen, and it is mainly owing to this extensive advertising business that so many of the local newspapers subsist. It is always expected that the editor should call attention in the body of the paper to the advertisement when first inserted, and accordingly you continually see such notices as the following: "We call our readers' attention to the auction of boots and shoes by our fellow citizen, Washington Hubbs, which appears in our advertising columns this day. Wash is pretty tonguey, and generally persuades folks to buy." Or, "Our readers will observe that Messrs. Caleb Johnston and Co. have opened a restaurant on the corner of Jackson* and Fremont-street, where the tallest sort of feeding may be had at all hours at the lowest possible cost to the spondoolics.† We advise our friends to give Caleb a call." Advertisements of hotels, with an initial letter of a Noah's ark like house, or of mule and horse dealers, and hirers, figure extensively. What would the London Times say to the following, which I cut from the Idaho Statesman.* The advertiser is apparently aggrieved on the head of some rivals running an unfair competition with him:

"Opposition is the life of business!

"Work for nothing and find yourself, Mr. R., and I am with you, you d——d old rascal.

"Here we go!

Horses kept to hay per night	$1 00
Saddle horses per day	1 00
Two horses for buggy per day	2 50
Oats per pound	5

Call any time, day or night!"

"A new era! Wool mattresses in Grande Ronde Valley, Oregon. Prices reduced. The cheapest house in the 'burg.' All the creature comforts to be had at 'our house' as they can be had anywhere on the sunny side of the Blue Mountains.

"Are you hungry? Come to our house.

"Are you thirsty? Take a drink.

"Are you weary? Try one of my mattresses.

"Are you sad? I will condole with you.

"Are you glad? I will rejoice with you.

"If you are mad I will go out and—spar with you.

"Come and see me!"

Roadside hotel-keepers are every now and then calling the miners' attention to their "square meals:" by which is meant full meals, in contradistinction to the imperfect dinner a man has to put up with on the mountains. Men who wish to buy timber are referred to this solemn announcement of the fact of some timber being for sale:

"Grand benefit of Salem, Marion County, Oregon. From and after this date we propose to sell lumber laths and slabs as cheap as any other high-toned mill in the country. Times are changed, and we have changed the credit of one year, and return to ready pay, without which no Webfoot† need apply. Book-keeping is most effectually played out. You that owe come to our office, there's the place, and settle now. We cannot afford to wait, and when we commence to *dun*, we never get *done*. Be wise to day, 'tis folly to delay!"

Queer people follow all sorts of queer businesses out west. A classical scholar was keeping a hotel in Victoria, Vancouver Island, as might be inferred from his advertisements, which used to be interlarded with Greek and Latin quotations from Æschylus, Plato, Horace, Oppian, and Ovid. Sometimes the newspapers contain an ominous warning from the "city marshal" to certain suspicious characters "to get up and dust," or an announcement of some indignant individual who has been paid in greenbacks instead of gold, as is customary all over the Pacific still, notwithstanding the depreciated currency,

* In Sacramento the streets are named A to B and First, Second, Third, and so on; monotonous, no doubt, but still a relief to the everlasting Washington, Jackson, Fremont, Kearney, &c., streets.

† Money.

* June 13, 1865.

† A slang phrase for an inhabitant of the rainy valley of the Williamette.

with the heading, "Spot him! spot him! spot him!"

The following melancholy advertisement is culled from an Oregon paper:

"Will the gentleman who stole my melons on last sabbath night be generous enough to return me a few of the seeds, as they were a very rare variety."

Marriages are expected to be, or, at least, are, accompanied with some guerdon to the printers. At the end of these announcements you generally see something like the following, "Our staff return thanks for their present, and drank the happy couple's health in flowing bumpers of champagne." The present consists almost always of a few bottles of champagne, as no charge is made for such announcements in the local papers.

Typographical errors are always troublesome, and a Western paper is usually distinguished for their number and variety. Occasionally these errors become matter of considerable difficulty to the editor, and add one more responsibility to many others. For instance, a friend of mine got into a little trouble that way. In a weak moment he agreed to conduct the weekly paper in a mining village, for the editor, who was called off on other business. All went well until a leading man among the miners brought in an obituary of his deceased wife, who was about the only white woman in the village. Now, as items are scarce, it was sent straight to the printer. On revising the proof my friend found that it read, "she was distinguished for her *virtue* and benevolence." He concluded that the husband must have meant *virtues*. A proof was accordingly despatched to the husband, with a request to correct it and send it to the printer. My friend went to bed. Early next morning he was roused by an acquaintance with a paper in his hand, informing him that Jim So-and-So (the author of the obituary aforesaid) "was *hunting* him (*i.e.* the editor) all over town." Now, as "hunting" a man means, in the West, going through all the drinking shops with a huge revolver in hand, shouting "Where is he?" my friend had just reason for alarm, and inquired what in the world he was being "hunted" for? "Oh!" was the reply "fun is all right, but you know that item about old Mother ——, was a little *too* much. She mightn't be just the correct thing, but still Jim thought a sight of her!" It was some time before the temporary editor could understand what was meant, until the paper was shown him with the obituary intimating that "Mrs. —— was distinguished for her *virtue* (?) and her benevolence." The husband knew nothing about a proof, and the printer had treated the query as an editor's correction. After considerable difficulty the indignant husband was consoled, and peace was made over "drinks" in the nearest "saloon."

Errors of context are not unfrequent. Thus, the San Diego paper announces that the schooner, General Harney, had just arrived in the harbour, with "no passengers but Nathan Brown, who owns half the cargo and the captain's wife," or that there was lost "a valuable new silk umbrella belonging to a gentleman with a curiously carved head." Sometimes the "make-up" of the paper is a little out of joint. Thus, it was rather a mistake, savouring of grim humour, to put the arrangements for a police commissioner's funeral under the head of "Rural Sports." Paying in advance is always one of the cardinal virtues in the subscriber to any periodical; but perhaps the pious editor of the Christian Index need not have announced so prominently that "but a week since we recognised the death of an old father in the church, a careful reader of the Index and who paid for three papers in advance." In a country where every year thousands of emigrants from the south-western states arrive over the "plains" and the Rocky Mountains, full of stories of Indian fights, and "chock full of alkali," a good itemiser of such matters is important. Accordingly we find announced that "We have engaged the services of an immigrant editor, to whom is entrusted all matters connected with Injuns, fights, and alkalied subjects." Utah editors, notwithstanding the presence of the saints, are rather profane fellows. One of them heads his leader with the startling title of "Hell Boiling Again."

English newspaper readers would be rather surprised to find some morning their favourite organ printed on brown packing paper, by reason of the office having run short of the usual paper. I have seen this more than once in Vancouver Island. Again, the Chronicle, a paper published in the same English colony, off the north-west coast of America (worth stating, as its whereabout seems only to be known to a few F.R.G.S.'s) announces in a paper before me, that, "Owing to the market being bare of paper of the usual size, we shall be compelled to appear in a reduced form until the arrival of the mail steamer Active with a supply." Again, the same paper on one occasion appeared with one side blank, accompanied by an explanatory note that, "Owing to an accident, the composed matter got disarranged, and as there was no more time to set it up again, our readers will please excuse the blank page." Letters to the paper are not addressed as in England "To the Editor of ——," but "Editors Stump City Gazette," and commencing "Messrs. Editors." Some of these papers are edited by women, and in the controversy about women's rights it is worthy of remark that the feminine editorials are not the least truculent of the literary efforts: especially in times of political contest, when one of the sterner sex ventures to raise the lady's virtuous indignation. A female editor announces that, "Being a woman, she cannot take satisfaction of the low-lived hound who wrote the article in our contemporary over the way, but she has a little boy who will clean him out handsomely in about two minutes." Generally, just before an election contest fresh papers are started to advocate particular views, and

it is then that the western paper is seen in all its glory. It is rampant, and scatters slaughter on every side.

On the whole, I think that the most objectionable feature I observed in the western newspaper system, is the custom of "dead-heading," that is, of the editors going free on railways, steamers, stages, and even paying their hotel bill and livery-stable keeper by praising "the gentlemanly and high-toned proprietor." I know that many papers will not permit of this system. The New York Legislature passed an Act for abolishing and forbidding the "dead-head" system, as far as possible.

Taking them all in all, though the western papers may be rough in their language, yet, with rare exceptions, they are always decent. They may be rude in their humour, but their rudeness differs as much from the double entendre of the low class of city papers as much as the honest clay of their own prairie lands differs from the slime of the street. On the whole, they work for good; and if their literature be not very refined, neither are their readers. So if it do not civilise them, neither does it suffer them to remain barbarous—as they would be very apt to be in the rude society of the remote far western glens.

QUITE A LOST ART.

"What have you there?" said Robinson. "The draft of a deed or of a last will and testament?"

"Nothing of the sort," replied Brown, "but an odd sort of story in manuscript."

"Ancient?"

"By no means. When I took these lodgings I found it in the cupboard, which had not been opened for several months, and the landlady recognised the handwriting of a former occupant, who, constantly kept at home by stress of weather, was driven to amuse himself by reading all day long the books of an old-fashioned circulating library. The library is now shut up, but I found the catalogue in company with the manuscript. Here it is."

"Ah, I see! Manfrone, the One-handed Monk—Romance of the Pyrenees. The books belong clearly to what may be called the fag-end of the Radcliffe school," observed Robinson.

"Precisely; and it is my opinion that the author of the manuscript, having nothing else to occupy his mind, wrote under the immediate inspiration of those remarkable works," replied Jones.

"Will you lend it to me?"

"Certainly. Keep it as long as you like. The landlady would only use it to light her fire, and I assure you I don't want to read it twice."

So Robinson took the manuscript home and read the following tale, entitled:

THE LAST OF THE COMNENI.

The heart of the young and noble Prince Astolfo was ill at ease, as, without fixed purpose or destination, he strode mournfully along the lone path near the summit of Monte Selvaggio. His beloved Bandelora had been ruthlessly torn from his arms, and carried he knew not whither by a band of ruffians, and her piercing shrieks seemed to be still ringing in his ears. Nor though the scene spread beneath his feet was curious, did it present many objects likely to cheer the pensive mind. At the mountain's foot, near the Lago Doloroso, stood the deserted abbey of San Corcoro, the windows of which, reddened by the light of the setting sun, showed that the hour was approaching when, if the wild tales of the peasants were true, the ghost of the lawless abbot, with his ribald monks, would rise anew to repeat the hideous orgies that had brought them to destruction. Further onward, on the plain, was the strange mound, with the dark aperture near its base, which had so often awakened the curiosity and awed the soul of the traveller, who, as he saw the Moorish minarets protruding through the earth, as if a building had been buried by some ancient convulsion, could scarcely conjecture whether they had been produced by art, or were the fantastic result of some demoniac freak of nature. This mound, too, had been endowed with preternatural awe by the wild tales of the peasants, who regarded it as the abode chosen by the Evil One when he sought to work mischief in the hills and vales of lovely Italy. If to vary his sensations the young prince looked upwards, he saw perched on a sharp crag a small edifice of an almost cubical shape, a rude opening in the upper part of which served for a window, but which presented no appearance of a door. He had heard of this edifice from the peasantry. It was the reputed home of a being simply designated as the Mysterious. And the designation was not ill chosen, for no one had ever seen him, or heard him, or could say anything about him whatever.

Sometimes as he wandered onwards, the mind of the prince, when not occupied with the fate of his Bandelora, would stray to the strange story he had heard of that dreadful Tebaldo della Crusca, who, when about to be decapitated to satisfy the offended laws of his country, had declared that his head, when severed, would work more mischief than ever it had devised while attached to his shoulders. On this subject, however, he was not allowed to dwell long, for a shout arose from beneath so loud and so hideous that, valiant as he was, it caused his heart to quail within him. Looking over the precipice he perceived on a path some twenty feet below him, a repulsive figure, who, with strange antics, roared and howled at the sky, across the slope, which, by a not very abrupt declivity, descended to the mountain's foot. The only habiliment worn by this hideous creature was a bottomless sack, fastened round its waist with a thick cord, which left the legs and arms free to disport themselves in the most reckless gesticulations, while the spectral aspect of the figure was heightened by the long dis-

hevelled black hair that hung over its shoulders. Reverting once more to the wild tales of the peasantry, Astolfo had no difficulty in recognising in this miserable being the maniac of the Valle della Bomba, who frequently tore to pieces the children of the mountaineers when he met them in some secluded glen, and then bounded away beyond the reach of their infuriated parents. Nor, though he was richly endowed with the valour of his proud lineage, did Astolfo at all regret that he stood on a spot inaccessible to the maniac, whose contortions and shouts denoted the most ferocious condition of insanity.

The bounds of the monster increasing in height and violence, and therefore threatening to bring him near to the level of Prince Astolfo, the latter involuntarily hastened his steps, and with a smile that ill accorded with his deep melancholy, observed that the maniac did not advance along the path, but confined his leaps to one point. Still pursuing his course, he came to a small ruined chapel, the interior of which was easily visible, and in which he perceived a venerable hermit, deeply engaged in the study of a vellum scroll, while on the rustic table by his side lay a few roots and a skull, apt symbols of the mortality of earthly things. Deeply read in the philosophy of his time, Astolfo was aware that he too had a skull, and therefore his heart yearned with sympathy for the lost possessor of this poor relic of humanity. Still more was he struck with the tranquil appearance of the hermit, and as he yet heard the maniac's voice in the distance, he could not help exclaiming to himself:

"How unlike is the senseless noise of insanity that rendeth the air to the calm silence of wisdom that openeth not the lips!"

Scarcely had he made this profound reflection, when the hermit bounded from his seat, dashed his scroll to the ground, and uttered a savage yell, compared to which the loudest shout of the maniac was but as a whisper.

"Comnenus!" he said. "Comnenus! Rather had I perished in the lowest depths of Vesuvius ——" And he sank back upon his seat exhausted.

"Pardon a stranger, Holy Father," said Prince Astolfo, gracefully stepping into the chapel—"pardon a stranger, if he ventures to ask the cause of this strange excitement."

The hermit would probably have repelled him with anger, but the polished manner which had made Astolfo the favourite of every court in Europe was not lost even upon the mountain recluse, and, calming his violent emotion, he answered:

"Welcome, stranger. Sit thee down and hear the tale of my sorrows and my crimes."

"Crimes!—nay, Holy Father," said Astolfo, with an air of courteous disbelief.

"Ay, crimes, young man," interposed the hermit. "I recognise thy charitable spirit, and I perceive by thine air that thy education hath comprised every branch of knowledge. Still thy intimacy with my affairs is less than mine own. As the tale is somewhat long, first refresh thy mortal frame."

And placing a root in the hands of Astolfo, with a grasp which slightly crushed it, thus causing a damp, unpleasant sensation, he proceeded:

"Being a native of Andalusia, and a descendant of the old Gothic Kings of Spain, I naturally took an interest in the affairs of the Greek empire."

Astolfo did not exactly follow the chain of the hermit's reasoning, but he was too courteous to interrupt him with impertinent questions. The speaker, however, interrupted himself, for again bounding from his seat, he repeated the yell with a violence which made Astolfo place his hands against his ears, and then exclaimed:

"No—I will not relate the story of my grief in the presence of my dead and deadliest foe; for learn, oh young man, that this skull, which I heedlessly selected as a companion in my retirement from a hated world, is shown by this manuscript to be—— But no matter. Thus I cast it from me."

And seizing the skull, he tossed it into the air with a vigour which would have done honour to that thrower of the discus, whose strength is immortalised by the master of sculptural art. A yell from below, louder than any that had been heard before, immediately ensued, and was followed by a profound silence.

"Ha, ha! Then thou heardest plainly the voice of the Comnenus," cried the hermit.

"Something indeed I heard," replied Astolfo, who had a heart that could endure unmoved every shock not immediately concerning himself; "but as I am not personally acquainted with the Comnenus, pardon me if I do not commit myself to a hasty and inconsiderate judgment. Indeed, if it is to that skull thou givest the name of Comnenus, I would rather attribute the cry to some other source, for Professor Esculapio di Galeno, under whom I studied anatomy at Padua, taught his admiring pupils that the human head, severed from the body, is not capable of uttering a whisper, much less a shout like that."

The conjecture of the hermit was indeed incorrect; but the skull, though it had uttered no sound, had been the indirect cause of the terrific yell. The maniac, lured by the first shout of the hermit, had stealthily advanced along the lower path, but was suddenly checked by the descending skull, which alighted with such violence upon his head, as to make him lose his footing, and roll down the slope upon the plain, till, accompanied by the ghastly missile, he almost reached the deserted abbey of San Corcoro. The yell heard by the hermit and the prince had been the maniac's expression of pain on receiving the blow.

While these strange events were occurring on the mountain, the spirit of evil had been active on the plain. The abbey was tenanted, not, as the peasantry supposed, by the ghosts of

its former occupants, but by the band of ruffians who had carried off the peerless Bandelora, and who had made it their home, well knowing that popular superstition would shield them from all chance of intrusion. On the evening to which we now refer, a wild orgie was held by the marauders. At the head of a table which groaned beneath the weight of solid viands, and flagons filled with the inebriating juice of the grape, sat the leader of the lawless band, Ruggiero del Torrente, the terror of the Alps, the Appenines, and occasionally of the Pyrenees; while on each side were his reckless followers, who, heated with the generous liquor, shouted forth ribald jests, scarcely intelligible save to those who respectively uttered them, inasmuch as scarcely two of the ruffians came from the same land, or spoke the same tongue. At the further extremity of the hall sat a lovely female, whose hands were bound behind her, and who, with the fixedness of despair, watched the proceedings of the revellers. We need scarcely say that this was Bandelora.

"Hast thou reflected maturely on my proposal, coy lady?" said the terrible captain, after draining a vast golden goblet richly studded with diamonds. He then repeated the question in all the languages of his followers, that they might understand his meaning, for he had travelled in many lands, and was master of many tongues.

"I have only," said Bandelora, "to repeat my declaration of that hatred and contempt which I have already expressed till my tongue is weary. Sooner would I be the spouse of the malefactor whose gibbeted remains scare the mariners of the Adriatic than the bride of Ruggiero del Torrente. In that case," she added, with little scorn, "I should, at any rate, be a widow."

This reply was translated into the various languages by the captain, who, however, with the craftiness incident to his nature, took care to soften those expressions that might possibly have humiliated him in the eyes of his band, and perhaps have raised a laugh at his own expense.

"Night approacheth," he then proceeded, "and no marvel, for the mode in which we are compelled to converse causes small matter of discussion to fill up much time. Let that lamp, which suspended from the ceiling affordeth as much light as our dark souls desire, be kindled without delay." This done, he again addressed the fair captive. "Mark that flickering flame. Unless before it expires thou hast given thy consent to be united to me by the hermit of the Ruined Chapel, ay, and at tomorrow's dawn, thine obstinacy shall be punished with thy life."

The translation of this dreadful menace into the required languages gave Bandelora time for deliberation. When the polyglot speech was ended, she mentally folded her arms—the circumstance that her hands were tied behind her prevented her from doing so bodily—and looking full in the face of Ruggiero, she said, in an unshaken voice:

"Miserable ruffian! Were my hands at liberty, I would instantly dash out the light with the contents of yonder flagon. As this is not the case, thou mayst, as the ignoble vulgar say, take the will for the deed, and, considering the lamp morally extinguished already, execute thy foolish menace at once."

The captain was too much enraged to think of translation now, so merely exclaiming, "I take thee at thy rash word," he drew a pistol from his girdle, and pointed it towards Bandelora. The ruffians, rising from the table, retired to the opposite side of the hall, and watched the proceedings with fixed attention. Alas! the hard hearts of these rugged men were slightly moved by the sufferings of the lovely captive, but they felt deeply interested in the correctness of their captain's aim. As for Bandelora, she stood unmoved, like one for whom life has lost its every charm.

Ruggiero was, however, spared the commission of another crime. Just as he was about to fire, a missile flew into the hall through the window fronting him with a fearful crash, and extinguishing the lamp in its course, struck him violently in the middle of the face, causing him to fall backwards with a shriek of pain, while the contents of his pistol, discharged as he fell, were received in the bosom of the first lieutenant, who expired on the spot. All were enwrapped in the sable mantle of darkness.

The first impulse of Bandelora, when she had recovered from the surprise occasioned by the unexpected turn which affairs had taken—apt symbol of human mutability!—was to attempt flight. This appeared the more easy as the band were engaged with the fallen captain and the deceased lieutenant, their assistance to whom was greatly impeded by the darkness, so that in spite of their well-meant efforts their energies were chiefly expended in jostling each other. But as she advanced towards the door, rendered unable to grope her way by the inconvenient position of her hands, she accidentally set her foot upon a small round body, which, rolling beneath her, caused her to fall backwards, knocking her head so sharply against the table that she was well-nigh stunned. She was, however, sufficiently sensible to appreciate the kindness of a voice, which gently whispered into her ear:

"Be not faint-hearted. Consent to accompany Ruggiero to the Ruined Chapel, and deliverance will be at hand. Astolfo to the rescue!"

Thus solaced, and favoured by the darkness, Bandelora composed herself to sleep, as well as her position would allow.

The strange events which we have just recorded may be easily explained. Recovering from his torpor when the sun had set, the maniac, who had lain extended on the plain near the abbey, had felt the skull by his side, and, with that shrewdness which not unfrequently accompanies insanity, conjectured that this round object, revealed to his touch though not to his sight, had caused his rapid descent

from the lower mountain-path. In an access of mad wrath he vengefully snatched it from the ground and hurled it before him. It passed through the abbey window, breaking the glass and striking down the captain of the robbers, while the crash which it produced so greatly alarmed the maniac that he at once fled from the spot. It is scarcely necessary to state that the missile which had struck Ruggiero was the round body on which Bandelora had heedlessly set her foot.

Return we to Astolfo and the hermit, whom we left at sunset conversing in the Ruined Chapel. The holy man, freed from the presence of the offending skull, had gradually resumed his composure, and thus recommenced his narrative:

"Being a native of Andalusia——"

"Exactly. You took interest in the Greek empire," said Astolfo, with some impatience.

"True," returned the hermit. "Another prevailing sentiment I had inherited from my noble ancestors was hatred of the Moors, who, infidel dogs as they were, oppressed my suffering land."

"But that was a long time ago," interposed Astolfo.

"Young man," said the hermit, mournfully, "when the number of thy years is as that of mine, thou wilt know that hatred is not measured by lapse of time. Still I must confess that in the case of my ancestors the tyranny of the Moors was not altogether intolerable. For an estate that covered many fair acres they were merely required to pay to the Moorish king of Cordova the annual tribute of an ivory bandelore for the amusement of the royal children. But night is approaching—nay, already begins to enfold us—so let me illumine my humble dwelling by lighting this candle end, and placing it in the neck of this bottle of stone."

Having performed this act, and reduced the wick to its proper dimensions by a dexterous application of his thumb and middle finger, the hermit continued, not discovering the increased mournfulness that had overspread the already melancholy face of Astolfo:

"The bandelore, as perchance thou art not aware, is an ingenious toy, which derives its origin from the East. It is composed of two small discs, connected by an axle, to which a cord is attached."

"Like this?" inquired Astolfo, drawing from his bosom a bandelore of exquisite workmanship.

"That! That!" ejaculated the recluse. "Thou must have obtained that from the fiend himself."

"Nay, calm thyself, holy man," said Astolfo. "Seeing that thou leadest so strict a life, I marvel that thou art so quick in temper. This toy belonged to the being whom I love more than anything on earth."

"The young and inexperienced often love that which is evil," said the hermit, with a sneer.

"But this belonged to an innocent child."

"Whose name was——"

"Nay, her true name I know not, as I am ignorant of her parentage. She was found in infancy with this toy suspended round her neck, and has in consequence been called Bandelora."

"Let me look at it more closely," cried the hermit, snatching the toy from the hand of his guest. "Yes—true—the crest of the griffin! Ha, ha! the fates pursue me; but I will escape them yet!"

So saying, he rushed out of the chapel and hurried down the mountain-path, approaching a point where in its descent it joined the lower path, whence the maniac had fallen. Climbing from the plain beneath after his hurried flight from the abbey, the maniac from below reached this point at the same time with the hermit. Involuntarily they were locked in each other's arms, and then rolled together down the slope into the plain until they passed through the aperture in the strange-looking mound to which we have already referred.

Astolfo, grieved as he was at the loss of the precious toy, felt rather gratified than otherwise by the sudden departure of the hermit, of whose unaccountable ebullitions of temper he had become somewhat weary. Still he wished to know something more about him, and to that end picked up the scroll that had been thrown on the gronnd, on the occasion of the apparent discovery that the skull ought properly to be called "Comnenus." Reducing the candle's wick by the process already employed by the hermit, and moving the stone bottle to a position which rendered study as easy as possible, he read as follows:

"Gomez del Valparaiso, born on the banks of the Guadalquiver, held a high office at the Byzantine Court."

His further progress was checked by the sudden pressure of his hat over his eyes, apparently by the action of a human hand, while a breath, apparently from a human mouth, extinguished the light. Almost immediately afterwards his hands were seized and bound behind the back of his chair, and a voice whispered:

"Fear not; this is all for thy good. The Mysterious is thy friend."

The hermit on recovering his senses, after his involuntary passage with the maniac through the aperture, found himself in a spacious hall lit by coloured lamps, placed at distant intervals from each other, and inferred from the architectural ornaments which he saw around him that the building had originally been the work of the Saracens. He could the more readily devote his attention to these details, as he had frequently beheld his strange companion performing frantic feats on the mountain path, and therefore felt no curiosity concerning him. As for the maniac himself, as he had not any senses to recover, he drew no inference whatever.

The pair had not remained many minutes in the hall, when a stately person, attired after the Oriental usage, advanced from a recess, his swarthy countenance beaming with a courtesy which vanished when, as it seemed, he recognised the features of the hermit.

"Thou art Sancho del Valparaiso, and that is *mine*," thundered forth the stranger, snatching the bandelore, which the recluse had retained during his descent. The hermit sank trembling on his knees, but, quick as thought, his head fell to the ground severed from the trunk by the scimitar of the Moor, with the exclamation, "Thus perish the foes of Abderrahman!"

A short silence ensued, and then the Moor again lifted his voice, crying:

"Where is thy vile comrade?"

But the maniac, instinctively detecting the approach of danger, had stealthily stolen away through the aperture, and was now wildly leaping on the plain without, though he refrained from his wonted practice of yelling, lest his voice might attract the attention of the Moor.

The course of night appeared tardy to Astolfo as he sat bound in the Ruined Chapel, and at last yielding to nature's gentlest summons, he fell fast asleep. In the morning he was awakened by the sound of military music, and was pleased to find that he could stretch out his arms. His hat was also removed from the position in which it had so much embarrassed him, and sat in seemly fashion upon his head. On the table lay the scroll, with its back towards him, inscribed, "Push the wall," in words that had evidently been but lately written.

Wondering what this could mean, he now looked towards the direction of the mound, and saw ascending the steps towards the point where the lower and upper paths joined, a procession, led by a male and a female figure, and ending with two men, carrying what was apparently a lifeless body. We need scarcely explain that this procession was formed by Ruggiero's wild troop, and that the two leaders were the stern captain himself and the fair Bandelora, who, dissembling her hate, had unwillingly accompanied him to the Ruined Chapel. The body, which was that of the lieutenant, bore witness to the captain's regard for the treasury of the band. By requesting the hermit to bury the deceased as soon as he had joined the hands of the living, he hoped to obtain an abatement of the remuneration commonly demanded for the performance of two ceremonies so distinct from each other.

When the procession reached the junction point, Astolfo at once recognised with ecstatic joy the form of his lost Bandelora. He at once rushed down the upper path, snatched her in his arms, and rushed back to the Ruined Chapel. Ruggiero, stirred by the unlikeness of the stranger to the recluse, whom he had expected to find, was too much astounded to make any resistance, but in a few seconds he loudly called on his men to follow him, and hurried up the path. No sooner, however, had he reached the front of the chapel, than the wall fell with a terrific crash, overwhelming the marauders in its ruin. Some of them, including Ruggiero, were killed by their precipitate fall upon the lower path, some rolled, or ran unscathed, into the plain. But these had small cause for exultation, as a stately figure, dressed in Oriental fashion, appeared on the plain, and hurrying now in this direction, now in that, decapitated them one by one with a large scimitar. While this carnage was proceeding, the maniac on the lower path was whirling round and round with the most frantic shrieks, till at last, rushing to the brink of an abyss, which we have not mentioned, he leaped into the darkness, and never was heard of more.

When Astolfo and his rescued Bandelora, having left the scene of so many horrors, were resting at an humble but hospitable village inn, a boy of dark complexion, dressed in the Moorish habit, presented to them a small box, and then, with a graceful salaam, retired. On opening the box, they found the skull that had been so intimately connected with their fortunes, and likewise a vellum scroll, thus inscribed:

"The Moor, Abderrahman, sends to Theodora, wrongly called Bandelora, this precious relic of her father Isaac, wrongly called Tebaldo della Crusca, but really the last of the Comneni, and rightful Emperor of the East."

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A WEEKLY JOURNAL.

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

No. 492.] SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1868. [Price 2*d*.

NEW SERIES OF ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

I beg to announce to the readers of this Journal, that on the completion of the present Twentieth Volume, on the Twenty Eighth of November, in the present year, I shall commence an entirely New Series of All The Year Round. The change is not only due to the convenience of the public (with which a set of such books, extending beyond twenty large volumes, would be quite incompatible), but is also resolved upon for the purpose of effecting some desirable improvements in respect of type, paper, and size of page, which could not otherwise be made. To the Literature of the New Series it would not become me to refer, beyond glancing at the pages of this Journal, and of its predecessor, through a score of years; inasmuch as my regular fellow-labourers and I will be at our old posts, in company with those younger comrades whom I have had the pleasure of enrolling from time to time, and whose number it is always one of my pleasantest editorial duties to enlarge.

As it is better that every kind of work, honestly undertaken and discharged, should speak for itself than be spoken for, I will only remark further on one intended omission in the New Series. The Extra Christmas Number has now been so extensively, and regularly, and often imitated, that it is in very great danger of becoming tiresome. I have therefore resolved (though I cannot add, willingly) to abolish it, at the highest tide of its success.

CHARLES DICKENS.

HESTER'S HISTORY.

A New Serial Tale.

CHAPTER IX. A HOUSE OF PEACE.

The person who opened the door for Hester was a little plump pleasant looking nun, comely and fresh, with a fair round face under her plaited wimple, most like a pink-and-white daisy. Her long black rosary clanked against the knee of this little portress from the struggles she had been making with the great chains and bolts of the mighty door. Doubtless in the days when this portal had been fashioned it had been the duty of at least two strong men to manage such ponderous bars upon the gate of their noble master. But a soft-handed young maiden sufficed to deal with them to-day.

She did not look much older than Hester, and the two girls stood gazing before them some moments, each in the most thorough amazement at the unexpected apparition of the other. Hester had never seen any one in such a garb as this before, and the little nun, if she had ever met with the like costumes as this of Hester's during the term of her short acquaintanceship with the world, yet had certainly not looked to see a frightened Red Ridinghood on the threshold of her convent door of a morning.

But before there was time for a word to be spoken, the bright well-slept eyes of the little nun had travelled to Hester's weary lids, the look of surprise had passed away, and the paper which Hester carried being read, a very warm glow of sympathy kindled the countenance of the portress.

"This is for the mother," she said, briskly. "The sisters are singing matins in the choir. But the mother will be with you at once. Come in."

So saying she laid hold of Hester's hand like a child, and led her down the hall. This hall was long and wide and lofty, as the entrance to such a dwelling should be, but it was neither

dark nor dingy as one might have expected to find it. It had a flooring of warmly coloured tiles, with a mat here and there, on which waiting unaccustomed feet might take their stand, if it so happened they felt cold upon the stones. A landscape was painted on the lofty ceiling, a little faded and obscured by age, but with colours still rich enough and soft enough to suit the present character of the place. There was a very broad staircase in the background, balustrades and steps alike of dark-grained oak, over which the warm living jewels came dropping with the sunlight, whilst cherub's heads, laid lovingly together, looked down out of a deeply-stained window on the landing above. Most truly that old nobleman had known how to make beauty in his dwelling.

There was a sound of muffled music in the air, lulling and swelling as through closed doors, supplicating strains rising and sustaining their demand, then falling, sinking away softly, with great comfort, as in thanksgiving. The little nun bent her head, and moved her lips while she walked, as though it were her duty to join in the prayer as well as she might be able, being accidentally at a distance from her nook among the singers.

"In a place of pasture he hath set me," murmured the little nun, at a breath, like one hasty and hungry, swallowing a good thing. "The Lord ruleth me; and I shall want nothing. He hath set me in a place of pasture."

Then she threw open a door, and smiling, with the gladness of that whisper still lurking about her lips,

"Will you please to step in here," she said, "and wait, and I will go on the instant and give your message to our mother."

The room into which Hester was thus shown had been the nobleman's dining-room. It had brown panelled walls, and a brown glittering floor. The two long windows set up high and narrow in the wall had heraldic devices carved over them. There was a large vase of roses and lilies, a full-length statue of Christ blessing little children, an alms-box, with its label, "For the sick and dying poor," a table covered with a plain red cloth, with an inkstand, with writing materials, with a few books. The windows were already opened, and there was not a speck of dust about the place. It shone with cleanliness, it smiled with cheerfulness, it gave one good morning out of all its corners. It said, "See what a pleasant place has been prepared for you; sit down and rest." But Hester had no heart to respond to such a greeting. She stood there in this atmosphere of freshness and order, feeling all out of place in her flimsy crushed draperies, her gaudy mantle and dishevelled hair. She turned her back upon the sunlight, and stood waiting with her eyes upon the door.

By-and-by the handle moved, turned; there was a little rustling, as of fresh linen, a little rattling, as of heavy beads; the door opened, and the "mother" appeared.

Sir Archie's sister. One could see that at a glance; though, upon reflection, nothing could be in better contrast than the masculine boldness of the man's face with the feminine softness of the woman's. Here were sweet, tender, pitiful blue eyes, and a brow smooth and serene under its spotless linen band; no latent fire; no lines to show where frowns had been. The face was oval and softly moulded, and very winning for its exquisite freshness and purity. The mouth was mobile, and, though ever quick with a right word, was yet, in its changing expressions, most eloquent of much that it left unspoken. The complexion was so dazzlingly fair, so daintily warmed with vermilion on the cheeks, no paint nor powder could mimic it; only early rising, tender labours, never ceasing and perpetual joy of spirit could have combined in producing it. The quaint black garment, the long floating veil, and narrow gown of serge, were right fit and becoming to the wearer. They laid hold of her grace and made their own of it, while she, thinking to disguise herself in their sombre setting, wrapped the unlovely folds around her, and shone out of them, as only the true gem can shine. The shadow that the black veil threw round her face made its purity almost awful, but made its bloom and simplicity the more entirely enchanting. Not the satins of a duchess, not the jewels of an empress, could have lent half such a fitting lustre to this womanly presence of the gentle Mother Augustine, of the daughters of St. Vincent, of the very old convent of St. Mark, in Blank-square. There were sick men and women in her hospital up-stairs who could have talked to the world about her beauty.

A slight expression of wonder passed over the nun's face at the first glimpse of Hester's apparel. But one quick searching look in the shrinking eyes seemed to satisfy her. She drew the girl to a chair and sat down by her side.

"You have got astray, my poor child," she said, with sympathy. "You shall tell me all about it before you sleep, that I may write to your mother—to your friends."

"I have no mother, no friends," Hester broke out with a sudden passion. "I am an orphan, and a dressmaker's apprentice. I do not want to trouble any one, and I will not go back to them. I should have got on very well if they had left me at my sewing."

The nun listened in surprise, with a troubled doubt springing up in her mind at the quick incoherency of this speech. Then she glanced at Hester's face, which was held away, and saw that the eyes had darkened and swelled, and that two heavy tears were coming dropping down her cheeks. And she knew by the controlled lips that this was sanity in grief.

"You are in trouble, my dear," she said, softly.

"Ah, it is that music!" cried Hester, making a desperate little gesture with her hand. And surely so the music was rolling on within hearing, with its solemn appealing, and its sublime content; enough to make a sore heart break with envy.

"True; the music!" said the mother, comprehending. "Dear child you must confide in me. What! not afraid, surely? How the old men in the wards, and the children in the schools, would laugh at that original idea! You would be sadly out of fashion to be afraid of Mother Augustine."

Such a speech was too much for Hester. It broke all restraint. Her face dropped down upon her open hands, and she sobbed in an abandonment of loneliness and grief.

"There is nothing but rest for this," said the mother, standing before her, an arm round the bowed shoulders, a hand on the bent head. "A long sleep first, and then—confidence."

And so saying she led, almost carried, the girl to the door, across the hall, and away up that massive brown staircase, through the jewelled sunlight.

"You must not be afraid that I am going to put you into hospital," she said, smiling, as they went along, Hester walking composedly now, but hanging her tear-stained face, and clinging to the mother's hand. "We have a nice little cell for stray children like you. Sometimes we call it 'the little bower,' and sometimes 'the little arbour,' because we think it so pretty, and find it so useful."

So in the little harbour Hester was moored, and left alone, the nun having possessed herself of the name and address of Lady Humphrey. The prettiness of the room was not in truth made out of the luxury of its appointments; but bright it was, as a brown shining floor, snow-white walls, a white little bed, and a vine round the window could make it.

And there was a garden under the window of this little bower. It would seem that the very apple trees of that so ancient nobleman, which his housekeeper used to stew in their season, were still bearing their fruit between its walls. At least there are nowhere but the ghosts of dead gardeners who could tell us to a certainty whether they were the same trees or not. Yet, however that might be, the sick old men and women in the hospital of St. Mark knew the taste of the ripe fruit in the cup of their cooling drink. Now a long gleaming row of white lilies lifted the dew in their chalices to the sunlight, making a line of dazzling fringe along the sombre ivy of the wall. Vagrant boughs of jessamine were swinging loose upon the air, grasping at the breeze, as if the tough old bricks were not enough for them to cling to. Birds that had their nests in the trees, whose ancestors had had their nests in the same trees, were singing jubilates for the morning, perhaps meaning them for thanksgiving, that they, having been born city birds, had been so happy in their generation, never fearing what was to become of their posterity when the fair garden should be swept away with another cycle, when a weedy crop of houses should have struck root in the mellow earth, shooting their chimneys far higher than these branches had dared to soar.

This garden was all still, all holy. Neither the noise nor the wickedness of the city seemed to reach it, though both had been there, without a doubt, in the echo; in the memory and suggestion of a thing past, and left away in the distance; making the silence more delicious, making the holiness more solemn. Yet there were other things stirring in it at this hour, besides the bees. A few tranquil sickly faces were moving between the ranks of the flower beds, the rows of precious herbs, the nests of fragrant fruit, smiling here, and sighing there; mayhap wondering wistfully at the bounty of the good God, who had so brought them to life again out of the throes of anguish, and the travails of death, to thus bask in a sunny atmosphere of peace and bloom; to rest and be strengthened, and be led hither and thither; to be dealt with, in a sweet providence, by the unwonted hands of love. For these were the mother's convalescent patients from the hospital, and they were taking their morning airing while the sun was warm and new.

These things Hester saw from between the leaves of her vine; and these, and the ideas they brought with them, she gathered under the pillow of the little white bed, and so slept upon them; the plaining and exulting of that music which had ceased still following her slumbers, and taking the guidance of her dreams. And she wakened refreshed, though with a bruise somewhere in her heart that smarted at the touch of a recollection. And the mid-day sun was then hot upon the window.

Her limp white dress had been removed, and in its place she had a plain black robe, very neat and slim, with a broad leather belt to gird its folds round her waist. And while this was being assumed she considered, would it not be well if she could find a home in this place? She could sew, teach, tend upon the sick. She would see about it.

Two people were walking round the garden now, talking, stopping, walking slowly, very earnest. They were Sir Archie Munro and his sister, the Mother Augustine.

"Good God, drop a blessing on those two moving heads!" cried Hester, suddenly awaking to an enthusiasm of gratitude. "I will hold by their hands and they shall not send me back to Hampton Court. They will help me to be independent, and I shall not be shaken off any more. I shall not be loved and forgotten, cherished and deserted. Oh, Lady Humphrey! Oh, Mr. Pierce!"

The figures in the garden turned at the moment and came back again down the path, as if responding unconsciously to her cry; the features growing distinct each moment; two faces breathing and moving through the warm air together; two heads laid together for her good, had she but known it; two pairs of eyes full of promise for her, as she was vaguely aware, though she felt herself too strange in her new place in their lives to even dare to look such promise in the face. And these two people were—the rival of Pierce Humphrey, and the sister of the rival. And Hester was in their

hands, and had found the hands strong and kind.

Here then was the man held in aversion, yet to be honoured and admired, of Pierce Humphrey's love-story, the other hero of the romance, the second lover of Janet Golden. And Hester fell to wondering, aside from her own case, about this rare, remarkable, and most heartless Janet Golden. For rare and remarkable Hester had settled in her own mind that she must be; and any woman must be heartless who could endure to have two lovers. There was a page of pure romance now laid open to Hester's eyes. This grave stately person in the garden, was it possible he could have robbed the jovial Pierce of anything so trifling as a fickle lady's heart? As well might one tax royalty with picking pockets. Thus Hester was inclined to be enthusiastic about her new friends, as well as a little bitter against her old ones. And she placed the two men side by side in her thought, and judged them, unconsciously, with the simplicity and fairness of pure justice. The one who should have protected, had abandoned her to loneliness and danger in a crowd. The other, upon whom she had no claim, had rescued her at inconvenience to himself; had brought her and set her here, where she was in a goodly place of safety. Thus Hester judged, as most people judge, according to her own lights and experience. She did not say that Pierce was but a baby, while Sir Archie was a man. She did not say that Pierce, her old companion and playfellow, was a person to be comforted, laughed at, piped to, and danced with; never to be wept against, or appealed to; while that Sir Archie might be leaned upon as a staff that would neither bend nor break. Yet something of such thoughts must have been present to her mind, though she did not make the effort, perhaps would have not had the will, to give them shape.

And, despite the so sympathising assurance that she had given Mr. Pierce the night before, Hester could not now choose but have a doubt upon her mind as to the faith of Janet Golden in the fealty of her lover. Fate, perhaps, would not be dealing unkindly with that young lady if so be that it should force her to draw her hand from the loose clasp of Pierce Humphrey, and give her life with it into the keeping of this Sir Archie Munro.

CHAPTER X. A COLLOQUY.

"I AM uneasy about you, Archie," the mother was saying, as those two were walking up and down the garden path. "My mother writes me that she fears you are entangled, even against your will, in these schemes of rebellion that are on foot."

Sir Archie's face grew clouded. "That was indiscreet of my mother," he said. "If others suspect me, as I have been led to think they do—if my letters should be opened——"

"But it is not true—it is not true?" appealed the mother, with her blue eyes distended and anguish on her lips.

"Dear Mary," said Sir Archie tenderly, taking her hands, and holding them between his own. "It is not true, not exactly true at least, though certain it is that I am in difficulty and trouble about these matters, as every Irishman, with a head to think or a heart to feel, must be. Now I will tell you all about it, if you will be patient, that is, and strong. Why, Mary, to think of a courageous woman like you, who can dress a bad wound, who can go with a dying sinner to the very brink of eternity, who never quailed at fever, who is not afraid of the very plague itself!" he said, smiling; "to think of you turning nervous on my hands, and fading your cheeks at a moment's notice—all for a great brawny mountaineer like me—a strong fellow, who never felt a pain nor ache."

"This is not a case of pain nor ache," said the mother, sadly. "If it were I might help you. But if this be treason, rebellion, why you would melt away like snow from among our hands. We could do nothing for you."

And the mother's voice broke. She laid her head on her brother's shoulder, and trembled with great fear.

"Mary, Mary, Mary," said Sir Archie, lifting her face, and looking in it with smiling rebuke, "what would all your large family in yonder think of you if they saw you breaking down like this? It is enough to tempt a fellow like me to turn the tables and quote texts to you. Indeed, my darling, this distress is without cause. There, I knew you would be reasonable; and now you shall hear the whole story."

The mother recovered herself quickly, drew her veil around her face, and bowed her head to endure the listening to what she dreaded to hear. And the two walked on together as before.

"There is not much to say after all," said Sir Archie. "I need not tell you that my own little corner of the world has always been peaceful and happy; but neither need I tell you that I have mourned over the misery of the country at large. My heart has bled for it; bleeds for it. One would need to have lead in one's veins, instead of blood, to endure to see the things that are done in the name of justice in the open face of day."

"But you cannot cure them," broke in the Mother Augustine. "It is impossible that you can cure them."

"Impossible, I believe, to the attempt that will be made," said Sir Archie, "and, therefore, so help me God, I will guard my little flock from the destruction that must follow such an attempt. I will not lead them out to death, nor invite desolation to their thresholds, well knowing that not the shadow of a boon will be reaped by their children nor their children's children from the horrible sufferings they must be made to endure. Were they already in torture, like the unfortunates of many other parts of the country, and did they call upon me to lead them in battle, I would do it were it only a forlorn hope, and I fell among their feet at the first shot from an English gun. But we

have always lived apart from the rest of the world; our mountains have shut us in, and I pray God that they may shut out from us the horrors that are impending. I tell you, Mary, I never ride up the glen of an evening and see the wee toddling babies come peeping to the door to see me go by without swearing to myself that I will never make a sign that will be the cause of dabbling their helpless feet in the bloodshed of their kin. Let the sun rise and go down upon our peace so long as it pleases Heaven to leave the peace upon our thresholds. I have been placed over a few, and for the welfare of that few I am accountable. As for the many, God pity them! They will not succeed. Their leaders have been surprised, are in prison; they who could arrange and command, who carried the longest heads, if not the stoutest hearts. The informers are abroad, and the rulers of the land are urging on a rebellion that they may crush it with the greater ease. I will guard my happy glens from the wreck. But what folly to talk in this way!" he added, lightly, catching a glimpse of the mother's white averted cheek, "it will never come to that, I trust. The government will relent, will grow wise in time, and treat the country more kindly than it has done. Statesmen will see at last, though late, the mistakes of many ages. They will try redress of grievances instead of pitch caps and hanging. Come, cheer up, Mary, and let us talk of something pleasant."

But the mother was not ready to leave the subject. "Who is it that suspects you?" she asked. "If you declare yourself for peace, who can say a word against you?"

"No one but an enemy," said Sir Archie. "I did not know I had an enemy, but it seems I have one in ambush somewhere. No matter; let them do their worst. The only thing they can say is that at the first opening of the society I belonged to the United Irishmen. Like all other young men who had a throe of feeling or a spark of hope in their hearts, I rushed into it, eagerly insisting that we must wring attention from the King to the desperation of the country. That chimera faded," said Sir Archie, bitterly; "and since things have grown wilder and more hopeless, I have withdrawn from the schemes of the society, impelled by the motives I have described."

"It is well, it is well," murmured the mother, tremulously. "But this enemy, dear Archie? Who is there who should be at enmity with you?"

"That I cannot tell," said Sir Archie; "but there are few men so fortunate as not to have an enemy somewhere. I was not aware that any one was busy with my concerns until late last night, or rather early this morning. I had then an interview with Wolfe Tone, who has put me on my guard."

The Mother Augustine groaned. "Wolfe Tone," she repeated. "Oh, Archie!"

"Well, Mary? Is he a terrible 'old bogie' to your fears?"

"I know what he is well," said the mother, energetically. "He is a brave, daring enthusiast, but he will die in his cause. And you shall not die with him—no, Archie, no, Archie!"

"I am not going to die with any one, little sister, till my appointed day has been lived till the last minute," said Sir Archie, tenderly, carrying her white trembling fingers to his lips. "I agreed to meet Tone for the purpose of explaining to him clearly the conduct which I intend to pursue, and the motives which have determined me to persist in that conduct, in spite of many strong feelings of my own, and unbounded sympathy with the misery which is the main-spring of the attempt that may be made. I have tried to assure him that if such attempt be made it will be done clumsily, and must end in failure. I have implored him to use his influence in holding back the catastrophe, as the time is not ripe, as the leaders are in prison. He says that were impossible. The madness of the people is getting stimulated every day. They will have a leader of some kind; or, if necessary, they will act without a leader. We parted as we met, he deploring that I should insist on remaining neutral, I more and more resolved to follow the lights of my own judgment and experience. I believe, however, that I have succeeded in convincing him, at least, that I am in no respect actuated by cowardice or want of patriotism in my decision."

"Cowardice!" said the mother, amazed, and blushing at the word. "Who could venture to accuse you of such a vice?"

"Yet it may be that I have left myself open to the charge," said Sir Archie, "from those whose disappointment or anger may blind them for the moment, so that they cannot look my position in the face. It is known that I feel strongly for the affliction of my country, and those who know it may not all be aware that I believe myself more far-seeing than themselves, that perhaps I have more means, more leisure for looking onward than they have, that I find myself responsible for the well-being of my little clan, who look to me out of their peaceful doors for counsel and guidance. Yet," continued Sir Archie, thoughtfully, "did they but consider the matter thoroughly they would see that, in the event of a struggle, by refusing to side with one or other party, I should leave myself at the mercy of the fury of both, and deprive myself of all hope of the protection of either—a position which it requires some little nerve to face. But come, Mary," he added, "we have had enough of this. You must ask for your old friends, or there will be woful disappointment when I go home. The old women will be bobbing curtseys along the roads, and will think something is sadly amiss indeed if his honour cannot give them a message from 'Miss Mary, God love her.'"

The Mother Augustine, thus admonished, made an effort to dismiss her fears, and became, in outward appearance at least, her tranquil self again.

"There is much home news that I want to

hear," she said, tuning her voice to its ordinary tone of steady sweet contentment with all things. "What is this that my mother writes me about Janet Golden, dear Archie? Are we likely to have a wedding soon, if all go well among our mountains?"

Sir Archie started slightly at this question, as if it were one he had neither wished for nor expected. A shade of pained perplexity was on his face as he made answer.

"My mother can tell you more of this affair than I can," he said. "I really can hardly explain how it has grown up. If you ask me do I wish to marry Janet Golden, I say frankly, I do not. I have no wish to marry any woman at present; neither is Janet the kind of woman I should select. She is too fond of gay life in the cities to love a happy country home. She has no interest in my interests, no concern with my concerns. She is—let me see—well, I believe I am not good at drawing nice definitions; but she is not my ideal of a wife, sister Mary. You will wonder, then, how I have been weak enough to become so entangled, well knowing that I am not versed in the art of love-making for pastime. But of course you have heard it all before now; that silly old story of an engagement made by two mothers when Janet was a baby and I a mere boy. I own I have been hearing of it and laughing at it for years, and not troubling myself to realise my position or to interfere and declare that I had no intention of acting up to such a ridiculous arrangement. And now suddenly of late, when I had forgotten the whole affair, the young lady is introduced under my roof, and I am presented to her by my mother as her fiancé. And she seems quite content: takes it as a matter of course. How else should she take it, says my mother, when she has looked forward to the prospect all her life? And I have never summoned courage to undeceive her as yet. And so the matter stands, while every day assures me she is not the woman I could love. I cannot feel any wish for her perpetual presence at my fireside, any impulse to share with her my most intimate feelings; therefore, I find it hard to wed my wishes to her whims, as I find her constantly expecting me to do."

"I am sorry to hear this," said the Mother Augustine. "I had hoped it might all have been so different. I remember Janet a merry arch little girl, and I had hoped that she might be very fit to bring new life into the old home."

"Do not let me underrate pretty Janet," said Sir Archie. "She has indeed all those points which are said to make up a charming woman, to wit, bright eyes, saucy words, a very tiny satin slipper, and a more than ordinary share of caprice. But I am afraid there are some things which are sadly thrown away upon me, Mary, some super-excellent enchantments which the modern poets rave about. Now, if her soul were but as deep as her eyes, her sympathies as keen as her wits—I am afraid I am a very old-fashioned fellow in my tastes. But then you see, if a man lives in an old-fashioned castle, among old-fashioned hills, over-seeing the lives of old-fashioned people, it seems natural to follow that he should allow himself to be moulded by his circumstances, or else always live at war with his fate. And so I suppose he may be excused for feeling rather doubtful about the propriety of taking a new-fashioned wife, at the risk of poisoning her with his uncongenial atmosphere."

"My mother should have had an eye to the antique in her search," said the nun, smiling; "I should not wonder if you had set your heart on Cousin Madge on the sly."

Sir Archie laughed. "Poor Madge!" he said. "How indignant and shocked she would be to hear you! But I did not make any mention of the antique. Old-fashioned is a word which is applied oftenest to children."

"Yes; and my mother's Janet is neither simple enough nor wise enough to suit you. It is a pity—a pity; and her wealth would have been so useful in your hands, dear Archie."

"What is the world coming to when even you are turning mercenary?" said Sir Archie, smiling.

"I mean useful to the world," said the mother, gravely. "If I did not know you fitted for such a stewardship, I should pray that you might remain untempted by the trial of over plentiful possession. But you are not a boy now, Archie, and the years of your early youth have proved you. I would make you guardian of the poor over untold gold. The blessing that is settled on your glens must extend beyond their limits, so far as wealth can carry your power. If our poor Janet marry some worldly man of fashion, for instance, will not her many thousands be swallowed up in the whirlpool of folly, of selfish luxury and neglect of her fellow-creatures. If you have their management they will be sown deep in the very heart of nature, to come up again in peace and security, in love and enlightenment, for the future generations of at least one happy corner of the earth."

"May be so, Mary, may be so," said Sir Archie. "But you do not know how I might change my ways if it happened that I turned out a millionnaire. I could indeed enjoy the freedom of action which enormous wealth can give. But in the meantime I have always had enough for myself and my people."

"And Janet?" asked the mother, after some uneasy reflection. "What attitude does she take in these arrangements? It seems to me, Archie, judging from the tone of this confidence, that you must play the part of lover in a lukewarm manner. And it strikes me, as I remember the little Janet of old times, that she was of rather an exacting disposition."

"I can vouch for her that she has not lost that trait in her character," said Sir Archie, smiling. "But as I have said before, my mother assures me that she is satisfied. And that being so, she points out to me that I cannot draw back from this engagement with honour."

"Then you mean me to understand that you and Janet have never spoken on the subject?"

"I do," said Sir Archie. "She seems to avoid it, and so do I. Indeed, I hardly know what we could say if we tried."

"That may change, if you are wise and kind, Archie; but it would be terrible for you to marry while things are thus."

"I do not believe we shall ever marry," said Sir Archie. "In the meantime, I leave the chances of my release in the hands of time and a capricious lady, and have many other matters to think of."

"Yes," said the mother, thoughtfully. "And I had almost forgotten," she added, after a pause, "that I too have another matter to think of, and speak of. That poor child whom you sent here this morning."

"Well," said Sir Archie, with interest, "what of her?"

"I have written to her friends," said the mother. "Though, indeed, I question if they be much her friends either, so reluctant does she seem to return to them. And, Archie, is it not strange——?"

"Well, Mary, what is strange?"

"How oddly people turn up again in the world. Do you remember the name of Judith Blake, the heroine of so many of our old nurse's strange stories? Judith Blake, who became afterwards Lady Humphrey?"

"I remember."

"This girl in some way belongs to a Lady Humphrey, whom I believe to be that identical Judith Blake. It is to her I have written—to Hampton Court, where she lives. And this girl does not love her, no more than did the people of Glenluce, long ago."

LEAVES FROM THE MAHOGANY TREE.

A DISH OF FRUIT.

After the refined and complicated luxury of a good recherché dinner, we seem to go back, when the fruit comes on table, to the primitive simplicity of the earliest ages. We consume our entremets and our fricassees, our soups and our made dishes, and then our host, as if the répertoire of delicacies had been exhausted, steps out into his orchard and his garden, and brings us in a simple handful of fruit; a bunch of golden grapes, some apples painted red and yellow by the soft pencil of the summer sunbeam, a dusty velvet peach, or some honey-fleshed apricots. He is doing what King Alcinous may have done to Ulysses and the storm-beaten Greeks; it is patriarchal, it smacks of the golden age and the old mythologic times; yet it is a custom that does not wither, and will never grow unfashionable. How things alter! The salad, once all that the hermit had to live upon, has become a relish for the gourmand; cheese, once the shepherd's only food, is now an entremet after many courses; fruit, once the only food of the early denizens of a world, is now the mere crowning pleasure of a dinner.

Fruit requires no human cooking; the great stationary fire has cooked it to a turn. It has been basted with dews; the soft balmy summer rain has been its sauce. Its flavour has been mixed by the ministering spirits of garden and orchard; its colour and shape are of a lasting fashion; it contains essences never discovered, and wines as yet undreamed of; it is older than the cutlet, and anterior to the fricandeau; its seed blew to us from Eden, or it fell to us from the amaranthine gardens. Turtle soup is sublime, and there are ragoûts which exercise a moral and psychological influence over the world; but they are earthy, their component parts are known; there is not the mystery about them that appertains to fruit.

The finest orchard in the world is Covent Garden Market. A gorgeous sight in the season, it conveys a vast sense of the greatness of England and the distance her far-grasping arms can reach. Those leather-coated chesnuts are from the mountainous woods of Spain; those grey flattened figs are from the hills behind Smyrna; those orange golden pines with the bristly plumes, grew at the foot of the Blue Mountains; those pale green fleshy grapes came from Portugal; those scorched looking bananas from the Bermudas; those enormous pears, like pantomime pears (only *fifteen guineas the dozen!*) are from Provence; those nuts from the Kentish copses, jostle their browner and oilier brethren from Barcelona, and the sunny shores of Spain. Pomona and Vertumnus (now in the fruit business, and talking with a strong Hebraic accent), have summoned them from every quarter of the globe. Look at Pomona, she is trying to induce a young guardsman to give two guineas for a ball-room bouquet for a lady, while Vertumnus, refreshed with a light luncheon of fried fish, is arranging some filberts in a heap, to give a beauty and tenderness by contrast to a basket of peaches next them. Artful Shadrach Vertumnus. One ought to be charged for walking down that central avenue; the flowers are so beautiful, the smell of the fruit is so delicious. As a boy, we sometimes thought of living for a day on fruit, and spending the whole twelve waking hours here under cover. A water melon for breakfast, with some dates to wind up; plums, apples, and nuts for dinner; a tea of bananas and filberts; a supper of grapes and Normandy pippins.

But really to enjoy fruit, one should pick one's own and eat it in appropriate scenery under the tree from which it is gathered, or beside the bush whereon it has grown. The pear reached down from the pliant bough, where it has long swung like a golden weight for Mammon's scales, tastes as much better than the same fruit coldly cut by a silver knife, at a formal dessert, as a damson does, than its humble rustic cousin, the sloe; the strawberry has its finest fragrance only when discovered under its own triple leaves. When is the raspberry so delicious as when plucked from the straggling canes? The apple should

be twisted from its fostering twig; the grape bunch nipped from the ragged brown branch bound to the green-house roof. The best things refuse to be transplanted. What French custom really retains healthy life in England, what English custom really thrives in France? But let us ransack the Cornucopia of Pomona, and tumble out the fruit, dishful by dishful.

The raspberry is almost the earliest fruit of the year in France, and it lasts on the French table from the end of April to the end of September. Here nature is less generous with the fine flavoured dark crimson berry. How pleasant it is to pick the pulpy raspberries that often come off the stems as you touch them, and leave white, bald, and pithy stalks, like hat pegs from which the hats have fallen. What fragrance there is in the seed, how refreshing the smell as you bruise the berries, and their nectareous blood reddens your hands. The raspberry is balsamic, refreshing, and eminently wholesome, though delicate people call it cold, and consider that it requires sugar and wine to correct its effect on the stomach. As it is a shame that Milton and Shakespeare should be associated with the weariness of school tasks, so is it a thousand pities that the mature man should have his mind poisoned against that fragrant, fine flavoured, and delicious preserve, raspberry-jam, by the horror of youthful powders—cruel alliance, hideous ambuscade!—lurking wickedly under beguiling sweets.

It is a curious fact, and one that does not redound to the credit of French confectioners, that even as late as 1805, raspberry-jam was unknown in France! A cookery book of that date says distinctly—and no commentator, however much a special pleader, can explain away the matter:—"They have tried to make compotes and confitures of raspberries, but *hitherto*" (mark the remarkable and stultifying words, gentlemen of the jury), "HITHERTO without success. The fire carries off almost all the perfume." Carries off, quotha! Why no preserve in the world has such a bouquet.

Cherries look very well at a dessert arranged in quadrangular pyramids—pyramids of rubies and cornelians—piled like cannon shot on the terrace of a Chatham battery. A standard tree laden with rosy May Dukes just after a shower, and shimmering in the sunshine, is a sight to remember. So must the jewels have grown on Aladdin's trees in the subterranean garden. The little dark Kentish cherry, with its black juice, is a mere wild fruit compared with that rustic beauty the red and white May Duke or the lordly bigaroon. The best cherries in Paris come from the pleasant valley of Montmorency. The "guignes" and the "short-tailed gobets," are also good and estimable kinds. The invalids, croaking again, declare bigaroons to be indigestible, and guignes heating; but this is nonsense. The French dry cherries in the oven, make dragées of them, and preserve them in vinegar. In brandy we all know them. They give the spirit a delicious flavour, but the tawny fruit, so generous that it gives away everything, becomes itself a mere brown tasteless sop.

The apricot is a delicious fruit: not brimming with scented cool juice, like the peach, but more like a fruit that has done its best to turn into a preserve. The nutmeg apricots, freckled and small, are of a fine flavour, but not so refreshing as a peach, nor so nectareous as a nectarine, but still very pre-eminent. The French excel in apricot marmalade, and at Clermont and Auvergne they make an apricot paste, cheese we should call it, which is quite a grand article of commerce.

The standard apricot, which has the sun and air all round it, and grows in a natural way, bears little orangey fruit, preferred by great connoisseurs to that of espaliers, though they run smaller. The skin should not be removed from apricot preserve; it is full of flavour, gives variety, and serves to embed the white almondy kernels, which contrast with the luscious golden fruit. The espalier fruit is seldom ripe all the way round. The apricot makes a delicious ice, and, when dried and stewed (this is the famous Mish-mish of the Egyptians), it forms a fine change for convalescents, as it is free from acidity and is nourishing and emollient.

Gooseberries (as schoolboys we always called them, with affectionate familiarity, gooz-gogs, but why we never knew) are the same as what the Scotch call "honey-blobs." So we read in the history of Lord Lovat, who stopped and bought some when on his way to the Tower, where the axe was grinding for his rascally old neck. The gooseberry is the chief constituent part of English champagne, and it is supposed to account partly for the vast yield of the vineyards of Epernay.

A gooseberry is not a pretty fruit; it is hairy, like a harmless little bantling hedgedog; it has not the transparent cornelian jewelled character of the white or red currant; it has no purple grey powder of bloom on it, like a plum; it is just a bag of syrupy pulp and whitish and greenish seeds: a bag which you squeeze as you do shaving cream from the collapsible tube. Boys liken ugly blonde persons' eyes, when they are dead and insipid and lack lustre, to boiled gooseberries; and the chins of immature hobbledehoys, when first beginning to sprout in a callow sort of way, have been playfully compared to the same featureless fruit. The Westphalians make a sauce of the gooseberry, to flavour the raw ham they devour in a cannibal sort of way. The ingenious French play all sorts of tricks with the gooseberries. They crystallise them, they pulp them, they strain off the seeds; they preserve them, they make a fine jelly of them, which is peculiarly useful in fevers; they make a liqueur, a syrup, and very excellent ices. But, for all that, an English gooseberry pudding with a thin paste, and a little butter inserted under the uplifted crown of its hat, is a thing not to be despised.

The strawberry deserves a special place of honour in our dish of fruit, for does it not melt at

the pressure of the lips, and leave a fragrance wherever it has rested? In jam, in ices, crystallised—any way—the strawberry is delicious; wild or cultivated it is equally admirable and perfect. No one need fear eating it. Smothered in cream, it would not have been rejected, even at Olympian tables. Yet it is a singular fact that the Almanach des Gourmands of 1805 says: "The strawberry has a delicious but very strong perfume, which does not please every one; for which reason, when served round strawberries are usually mixed with raspberries and gooseberries." Why, surely the Revolution must have turned the good people's brains and disturbed their organs of taste! The man who dislikes the flavour of strawberries would be offended at violets, and turn up his nose at honeysuckles. Yet it is remarkable that, when preserved, the French often mix the compote with gooseberry jelly; still they have the good sense to make of the strawberry, ices, dragèes, sirop, marmalade, and crystallised confitures. They have, however, a horror of eating strawberries freely after dinner.

Nuts!—the very sound of the word sends us back to broad leafy hedges and crooked sticks, and to those laughing boisterous searches for the brown rustling bunches that the squirrels so envied us. We can imagine a satyr throwing down a crisp armful of filberts at the white feet of the wood nymph he loves. The cob-nut, coarse and generously large; the filbert, fine and white in the grain as ivory; the walnut, with a kernel inside its wrinkled shell, constituted like the folded-up brain inside the human skull—all are welcome to us and appreciated. How the quick-turning malicious-looking earwigs, tumbling from the brown filbert husks, used to frighten us; and how we used to wonder how the big fat sleepy maggot ever got inside the brown barrel of the nut through that small circular bunghole so neatly and carefully rounded!

They eat the cerneaux (unripe walnuts) in Paris with verjuice, salt, and pepper, which has been sprinkled on them some hours previous to the meal. They are nice, but indigestible. It has often struck us (we may here be pardoned for mentioning) that as green walnuts make an excellent pickle before the shell ossifies, possibly green filberts would be also sweet and palatable, pickled, though not, perhaps, so fine in flavour.

The peach is one of the most aristocratic of naturalised European fruits. It should be eaten on a hot day in Ispahan, just after bathing, and on the cool edge of a marble fountain. Put on a green silk and cloth of gold turban, a white cashmere dressing-gown, a yataghan, and red turned-up slippers, read a poem of Hafiz, and *then* eat a peach; you'll find that will be something like a peach, and the flavour will be as different from the ordinary flavour as a potato eaten from the fingers differs from a potato eaten from a fork. The peaches grown at Montreuil, near Paris, are incomparable. They are overflowing with juice, and their scent and flavour are not easily forgotten. The people of that village have grown peaches for centuries, and they know exactly how to produce them of a sumptuous size, and of the fullest flavour. The Mignonne, the first peach in Paris, appears at the end of July; but the Téton de Venus, which ripens towards the close of August, is the queen of all. At Metz they make a wine of peaches, which, when it is old, is rather puzzling to the connoisseur, and by no means despicable. The French cook peaches "cuites à l'eau comme des œufs à la coque;" they brandy them as the Americans do, they dry them, they make ices of them, they manufacture from them marmalade, a preserve, and a paste.

Who that has travelled in France, but must remember those four beautiful families of plums, the Reine Claudes, the Mirabelles, the Prunes de Monsieur, and the prunes de Sainte Catherine! What is so perfect as, what more honied than, a red freckled sunny greengage on which the wasps have bitten their custom-house mark of approval? Honey, indeed, but what honey: the fruit is a ripe bag of preserve hermetically sealed, hanging ready to our hand. Nothing can be more delicious than a Reine Claude in Switzerland, that has dropped from a hedge-row tree, and dried in the open sun. The largest and best French prunes come from Touraine, and those of Antes and of Lorraine are also celebrated; the brignoles from Provence are specially famous; they are small clear red plums, firm fleshed and sweet. With the outer skin and the stone removed, the Mirabelles of Metz are also to be commended as excellent. The French brandy the Mirabelles, and the Reine Claudes. Stewed prunes are delicious and very wholesome. We must not forget how often Shakespeare speaks of them, and that Master Slender fought a master of fence for a dish of them: three venus making the rub.

But after all what can equal a good pear, for a real meal of fruit? How it dissolves on being touched by the teeth! What a flavour it has! What a vast difference between a melting Swan's egg, and a Beurré, or a Marie Louise, yet how impossible to describe the difference in words, however subtle. How richly mellow a Windsor pear is, yet how unlike a Bergamot, and still there is to both flavours a common generic character. France is the special land of pears, and French gardeners glory in the doyenné, the beurré (butter), the Crésyanne, and the St. Germain. The good Christian, the Rousselet, the Messire Jean, and the enormous Virgouleuse are also admirable sorts. For drying and stewing, they use chiefly the Martin-sec, and the Catilliard; the dried pears of Reims are also famous in Paris. The French preserve pears in brandy, and they use them for marmalade, and for jelly too, but not often. Persons with weak digestions eat them with sugar, or half cooked and then sugared.

Quinces, the fruit of which the Irishman wished his apple pie to be entirely composed,

only come to table in the shape of ratafia, marmalade, or jelly. In Paris, the quince jelly from Mâcon and Orleans bears a high name.

People talk of vineyards and the laughing vine, also about curling tendrils, and purple clusters, and they quote Byron until they really seem to forget that the ordinary vineyard grape, whether in France or Germany, is scarcely worth eating, and that one fine bunch of black Hamburghs from an English greenhouse, is worth a bushel basket of them. Our highly civilised grapes are higher bred, thinner, and more exquisitely fine in the skin; their pulp is less fleshy, and they contain more juice. Even the famed Chasselas de Fontainebleau are not to be compared with them for refinement of flavour. We have tasted grapes in a Syrian vineyard, when half the grapes were dried to raisins, and the contrast with the golden grapes turned to preserves in their own exuded syrup was delicious, but even they could not hold a candle to our black Hamburghs. Howbeit people tell you in Paris, that even the gilded Fontainebleaus are nothing to the muscatels of Languedoc, and these they often preserve in brandy. The raisins of Paris come chiefly from Provence and Italy, and those of Roquevaire are preferred even to those of Malaga.

The apple, homely but admirable fruit, painted red and yellow by the smiling sun, is, whether golden or red, equally acceptable to peer and peasant. What sight so glorious as a Quarenden tree, crimson with its short-lived apples, or a Codling weighed down with its gigantic green fruit. Apropos of apples it is a curious fact that only at Rouen can the gelée de pommes be made of the true transparent topaz colour. At Paris, it always clouds and thickens in course of manufacture. It is the same with dragées; it is only at Dresden they can be made white without artificial means. A good apple should sound quite hard and metallic under the knuckle; your rich yellow rinded pretty apples are generally over-ripe. The gelée of Rouen is obtained from the Reinette alone. The golden pippin, that delicious little apple, has become almost obsolete; and the famed Yorkshire Ribstone pippin, a greenish apple with red streaks, is now oftener boasted of, than really produced. The real Ribstone is deliciously crisp and sweet.

The French do more with chesnuts than we do; they ice them, they make a soup of them, and when ground to flour they use them in creams, omelettes, and soufflées. The pâté de marrons glacés is a great delicacy.

Figs, the French eat raw with salt and at the time of the bouilli. The Provençal are the best, but those of Argenteuil, near Paris, are juicy and full of flavour. Those who think our green figs worth travelling for (we don't think them worth opening the mouth for) should seek them in the fig gardens near Lancing. Our dry figs come from the Levant. In Paris they regard most, the Calabrian figs, and those of Provence, Italy, and especially of Ollioulles. It is more wholesome to take water than wine with figs.

Melons of late years have reached us in great numbers from Spain, and have become cheap. The smooth green melons from Andalusia are exceedingly good and deliciously sweet. The French make a sort of hors d'œuvre, or potage of melon, and eat it with butter or milk. The sweet melons of Malta and Honfleur, have a good name. The green-fleshed water melons of Provence are also commended as cool, juicy, and refreshing; but they have not much flavour. The French eat melon with pepper and salt, oftener than with sugar; sometimes with sugar and vinegar, sticking cinnamon and cloves into the flesh of it to flavour it. It is then eaten with the bouilli.

The French used formerly to eat also mulberries with salt and with the bouilli. They dry them, they make a wine of them, and they moreover use them to deepen the colour of their poorer red wines. A very useful jelly syrup for sore throats can be made with mulberries not quite ripe.

The oranges of Provence and Italy have little of the delicious scent of the golden Portuguese fruit. The French, who are too delicate to set to work at dessert and flay their oranges in a hearty way, prefer the fruit sliced into a compote, seasoned with sugar, orange flower water, and half a glass of brandy. This mess should be made several hours before dinner, to draw out its full flavour. But nothing can be so good as a high-bred, thin-skinned orange, the yellow peel removed, its white-kid stripped off, and the delicious juice left in the quarters, which a silver knife has decimated.

But let us close with the emperor of all fruit—the Anana—the West Indian pine, bossy as bullion, with grey bloom on its thorny leaves. The French make exquisite bonbons of it, a liqueur, and a lemonade. They eat the pine with sugar, wine, or brandy. They flavour creams and ices with it. For ourselves, we would as soon smell a pine as eat one. The fragrance is delicious, the taste not so pre-eminent. It may be heretical to say this—it would have been so at least when pines cost several guineas each; but when every Whitechapel lad can buy a slice of pine for a halfpenny, we feel less ashamed of ourselves.

MINOR MORALITIES.

The great principles of truth and justice, and purity of living, and respect for life and property, are matters of course in morals—the corner-stones on which the whole fabric of society rests, and as little to be argued about as that two and two make four, and not five. But there are certain smaller virtues, not generally so much respected, that yet are as important as the bigger ones in their own way, and for the work they have to do; for if not the foundations of society, they are portions of the superstructure—if not corner-stones, then four-squared ashlars, and well-planked flooring—perhaps only delicately wrought finials and

grand flowered capitals; at all events, things that make the family house more pleasing to the eye, and more comfortable to live in.

A great deal of mischief as well as misery comes from the neglect of these small virtues, these minor moralities of life. But as they are not in the decalogue, save by implication and extension, people do not take them to be of any consequence, but think they may be accepted or rejected according to individual pleasure, with no forfeiture or fulfilment of duty, which way soever it is.

Everything in this world goes by gradation. From truth and justice and doing no murder, and committing no crying sins generally, up to having your clothes well cut and your dinners well cooked, there is an infinite series of steps or stages; but they are tolerably well defined to one who has seriously studied social architecture, and has learnt by heart of what various materials and graduated values it is composed. And though all social virtues are but minor moralities when compared with the great first principles of religion, truth, and justice, yet they may be divided and subdivided into various values, like the rest; some being of really grave importance, while others are only desirable—some being part of the very fabric of society, others only the graces and ornamentations added.

We are all agreed about the more important. Such, for example, as the necessity of maintaining good temper under small crosses—of keeping secrets which are entrusted to us—of not setting afloat ill-natured reports, and not repeating unfounded gossip—of keeping within our means, and not coming to grief through reckless expenditure—of not interfering in other people's business, with which we have no personal concern—these are all minor moralities of a high class; and if not quite reaching to the height of imperative religious duties, yet attaining that of desirable social virtues, without which all things human halt and stagger, and there is no binding of the bundle of sticks anyhow. But there are other little virtues, not in general much respected—minor moralities, which are to religion and heroic goodness what the finials on the pinnacles, and the acanthus leaf on the capitals, and the mouldings on the wall bands are to architecture—virtues which do not rank even with keeping out of debt and keeping in good temper, but which are valuable, and to a certain degree inestimable. And one of these is keeping appointments; another is punctuality; and a third is answering letters.

There are people who never keep appointments, or at least who keep them only when it suits their temper or convenience to do so; who put no kind of social honour into the matter, but who fail or fulfil as chance may direct. As for any moral obligation in an appointment, there is as little in their code as there is a moral obligation to keep an astronomical reckoning. With unbounded recklessness they plunge headlong into every kind of engagement, then think themselves justified if they can offer what sounds like a reasonable excuse for not keeping any, or for keeping only those they care to keep. All their energy and intellect go into making these excuses—into rounding off rugged facts, and fitting in gaping dates. "They really could not," they say, with a well-planned—tale, shall we call it?—as the clincher of the excuse. And you may believe or doubt, according to the measure of faith that has been dealt out to you. But, believing or doubting, the result comes to the same thing; your time has been wasted, and your arrangements disturbed, your temper has been tried, and your welfare so far destroyed—and the excuse, however plausible, will not mend matters so far as you yourself are concerned. Do not think that your sufferings will be your friend's basis of reformation. His morality, or rather immorality, respecting the keeping of engagements will not be in any way improved because you have suffered; and the next time he or she says: "Yes, at six o'clock, most certainly. You may count on me: I shall be there," you may toss up for the chance, and calculate accordingly. When six o'clock comes you will probably be making yourself a spectacle to gods and men by pacing up and down the street, or lingering about the station, till the last train has gone; or you may forego pleasant invitations to things and people much desired and beloved, on the faith that your friend will put in an appearance *this* time, surely! All mere vanity, and the very babble of hope! It will not be a matter of conscience nor yet of breeding; for such people have no conscience, neither, whatever their rank, have they any breeding. For my own part, though keeping one's appointments does not rank as a virtue, nor breaking them as a vice, I would hold no man or woman honourable who was coldly or habitually guilty of this sin.

Twin brother to this fault is unpunctuality. If there are people who never keep their appointments at all, there are others who never keep them to time. These, too, are apt at clever excuses, and think a likely-sounding fable quite sufficient reason to give for throwing your whole day out of gear. To men of business, whose time is like an accurately-fitting puzzle, these people are simply so many forces of destruction. They upset every plan, derange every project, destroy every scheme: the accurately-fitting puzzle of the day, in which each hour has its own especial work which cannot be shifted or delayed without disturbing the whole arrangement, is of no more account to them than if hours and work were so many bowls to play at ninepins with. They dash into your office an hour after time, with, perhaps a real, perhaps a well-feigned, appearance of hurry and distress. If they have any conscience at all, and are faulty by reason of weakness in the way of gossip and consequent lingering, they are most probably unaffectedly sorry that they have suffered themselves to be so beguiled. If they are sinners of the active kind, and without

conscience, they make no sort of apology for their misdeeds, but affect quite a virtuous surprise if you reproach them. If you reproach them warmly they end by being the aggrieved parties, and perhaps quarrel with you because you did not approve of their delay. Perhaps, if the appointment has been for the settling of some important business, in which minutes count for hours, and the sands in the glass of time are all golden, perhaps then you can impress them with a sense of their enormity if they come very far beyond the appointed hour. And if it can be made clear to them that they have really run any risk, and incurred any loss, by their unpunctuality, that, touching themselves, may give them a stir up in the right direction, and may make them more careful for the immediate future. At least in important matters; but for the comparatively unimportant matters (comparatively with life and death and fortune, that is), say, a dinner engagement as an example, what habitually unpunctual man cares for that! He is asked for seven; at half-past seven or a quarter to eight, in he comes, with a happy smile on his face, as if he had struck the very point of time, and knew nothing of such vulgar annoyances as chilled soup or sodden entrées. If he can say that he missed the train, he is quite at ease with himself and all mankind; if he can further say that a man came in and kept him, that is reason enough and to spare for being too late for heaven. It never seems to occur to him that it was part of his duty *not* to be too late for the train—and that if any man whatsoever came in, his first obligation was to send him out again when the fitting moment for departure arrived. He *can* give no valid reason why he should have been late. His chief duty was to keep his dinner engagement punctually, and all the rest is merely excuse, of no real value to any one.

I have known a man of this kind, asked for seven, come in jauntily at nine. He had a patient, timid hostess, who had counted on him as a tower of strength, being a man with a presence, and a jovial manner, and an abundant atmosphere, and a generous vitality, and who, therefore, was of considerable value to the young dinner-giver. She waited for her tower just an hour and five minutes by the clock. When another half-hour had passed he entered with the air of a prince coming to his throne, and coolly accepted the offer of such meats and dishes as had long ago been relegated to the region of accomplished facts. He said he had been kept; further, that he had missed the train; and he had not the shadow of remorse so soon as he had made his excuse. The distress of the young hostess, her anxiety lest her dinner would be spoilt and her guests set out of tune, the fiercer annoyance of the host, careful of his bride and specially desirous that her trial dinner should succeed, the discomfiture of the people whose places he had already deranged and now again shifted—all this was of no more consequence to that unpunctual guest than so many drops of rain falling gently on the back of a sailing swan. I am bound to confess that my friend is notorious for this kind of thing. He is the best fellow in the world, frank, warm, and generous, a faithful friend, and kind and noble-hearted in all his relations, but he is unpunctual. You must give him a margin of perhaps some hours in all your appointments with him, and then think yourself lucky if you get him at the end. He makes it a practice to begin to dress at the hour of invitation, and he lives half a dozen miles from everywhere.

Another minor morality is carefulness and punctuality in answering letters. There are those who never answer letters at all, and those who answer without replying to them. You write for a special purpose. Unwisely you may imbed your special purpose in such a thick surrounding of padding that the point of it may be blunted by just so much. Still, you ask your question distinctly enough, and you make your point fairly visible. Your friend returns you letter for letter. Certainly so much morality he does accomplish; but you may look in vain from one end of the sheet to the other for any real reply. Your questions are all ignored, but your gossip is taken up and commented on. Padding is returned by padding, but the point is not so much as mentioned even in the most airy fashion. In all the husks so scrupulously exchanged, there is a total oblivion of the fruitful corn that was due as well.

Some great man, whose name I have forgotten at this moment, used to counsel his younger friends to spend but little thought in answering letters, because, he said, after a certain time they answer themselves. Not always; if even often. And granting that they do answer themselves, the sickness of hope deferred, the anxious watching for some assurance of certainty, the yearning, the disappointment, meanwhile, ought to be sufficient cause why any man with a human heart in him should reply with some degree of punctuality. How many love affairs have come to nothing just for want of answering letters! The lover is lazy, and puts off his answer till to-morrow. He had time to-day, if he would have exerted himself, but, like Christina Rosetti's prince, he dallies and delays, and does everything but what he ought; and when to-morrow comes, then come duties and occupations which cannot be put off. The next day it is the same; and the next; and the next; till such a time has elapsed that he is ashamed to write now. And so the affair dwindles and pines, and at last dies the death of starvation.

This may be said of all other relations which fail for want of the written food they live on. A gift is sent—a present of game, of flowers, of fruit, of wine—and naturally a reply is looked for: a few words of acknowledgment and thanks, just to let the donor know you have received his gift, and appreciate it as it deserves. But you cannot, or rather you will not, make the amount of leisure sufficient for those few words. You delay and delay, until at last you, too, are ashamed to write at all; the consequence is, that your friend takes offence.

The same may be said of visits. We drift from the time conventionally prescribed, into the dark region beyond, whence we can only retrace our steps by performing the penance of an apology. This is a region with rapidly widening circles of darkness, and corresponding intensity of penance. If once we pass a certain boundary, we are lost for ever; but though we know this, we go on and on till finally we come to that boundary, and then we cannot, if we would, turn back. Hitherto we might, with shame to guide and goad us; now not even shame will do; and no penance and no apology will open the gates closed rigorously against us.

More friendships have been lost for want of these small observances of letter-writing, return-calls, and the like, than for even graver faults. These neglects are to friendship what weevils are to ship's biscuit, what white ants are to your table-legs, what dry-rot is to your house beams, what rust is on your bright steel—the very essence and power of ruin; and no one who has as much intellect as would guide him safely across a common, if set in the right way, would ever run the risk of losing the best thing life can give us—affection—for such petty offences as these.

Another minor morality, or rather a whole group of them, refers to self-culture and one's own condition. Of these cleanliness is one, though, indeed, I almost question the propriety of classing cleanliness as a minor at all, and not setting it side by side with the majors. Also is it a minor morality to dress one's self with such an amount of beauty and attention as one can compass. Careless dressing, untidy habits, ugly clothes, are all minor immoralities, and show either an obtuseness of perception or an indifference to the feelings of others equally reprehensible, whichever it may be.

Also is it a minor morality to entertain your friends in the best way possible to your means, if so be you are minded to entertain them at all. No mock Gunterisms! no bad Cape wine labelled with high-class names, no pretences of French cookery, which are simply English meat made uneatable. Every attempt at things beyond your means is an immorality, just as the best that you can do is your bounden duty. And if you do not do this, give no more entertainments, let me beseech you, for they are but sorry shadows of entertainment to your friends and to yourself—merely marts wherein you buy their discomfort by your own loss of self-respect.

Lastly, we ought all to take something to society—our quota, which we feel it a moral obligation to pay. Your silent, reserved, perhaps discontented guests, who mope in a corner and bring nothing to the general fund, are profoundly immoral persons, judged by the rules of the Social Exchange, and fail in one of the implied conditions of their presence. We go to amuse as well as to be amused. In fact, all these minor moralities rest upon broad and important foundations; and we may be very sure that the more earnest we are in the fulfilment of the larger duties, the more scrupulous we shall also be to be without blame as towards the smaller.

METAPHYSICS AND THEOLOGY.

At the end of every road there stands a wall,
Not built by hands—impenetrable—bare.
Behind it lies an unknown land. And all
The paths men plod, tend to it, and end there.

Each man, according to his humour, paints
On that bare wall strange landscapes: dark or bright,
Peopled with forms of fiends, or forms of saints:
Hells of Despair, or Edens of Delight.

Then, to his fellows "Tremble!" or "Rejoice!"
The limner cries, "for lo, the Land beyond!"
And ever, acquiescent to his voice
Faint echoes from that painted wall respond.

But, now and then, with sacrilegious hand,
Some one wipes off those painted landscapes all,
Muttering, "O fools, and slow to understand,
Behold your bourne—the impenetrable wall!"

Whereas, an eager, anger'd crowd exclaims,
"Better than yon dead wall—tho' pale and faint—
Our faded Edens! Better fiends and flames,
By Fancy painted in her coarsest paint

"On the blind, bald, unquestionable face
Of that obstruction, than its cold, unclad,
And callous emptiness, without a trace
Of any prospect either good or bad."

And straightway, the old work begins again
Of picture painting. And men shout, and call
For response to their pleasure or their pain,
Getting back echoes from that painted wall.

ON THE PUNJAB FRONTIER.

A mail from India now and then brings news of the capture, assassination, or death in action, of British officers employed on the Punjab frontier. As this kind of news has not been heard for the last time, a little insight into the work of those whose duty it is to risk their lives in the raids and skirmishes constantly taking place on that frontier, may be worth giving to their countrymen at home.

The long strip of country bounded on the west by the Suliman Mountains, and on the east by the river Indus, stretching from Peshawur to Rajenpore on the Indus, about four hundred and fifty miles, is guarded by an army of twelve thousand men.

This army, rather famous in India, but little heard of at home, is called the Punjab Frontier Force. Its duties are to guard the frontier. On that long, and for the most part barren, strip of country, separated from the rest of India by roadless deserts and the grand flood of the Indus, it abides continually, unless great occasions, like the Indian mutiny, call for its aid elsewhere. The force, for the most part, is distributed among five garrison towns, each about a hundred miles apart, namely, counting from the north, Kohat, Bunnoo, Dera Ismael Khan (or as it is

sometimes facetiously called "Dreary Dismal Khan"), Dera Ghazee Khan, and Rajenpore. These towns are covered by an array of outlying forts, ten and fifteen miles apart; the smaller forts garrisoned by mounted and dismounted irregular troops, called the "Frontier Militia;" the large forts by a troop of cavalry and two or three companies of infantry belonging to the Punjab Frontier Force. The roads, or rather tracks, between these forts are patrolled night and day by detachments of the Punjab Cavalry and mounted militia. In the large towns patrols of cavalry go their rounds during the night.

The work to be done by the Punjab Cavalry is very heavy. The raiders, when hard pressed, leave the stolen cattle and rush to their hills and fastnesses, whither it would be unlawful, if it were possible, to follow them. The troopers, therefore, when they do happen to come up with a body of thieves, however large, proceed to charge, with something like the satisfaction of an angler, who, after hours of unsuccessful whipping of streams, finds that he has to play a monster fish. The frontier Afghans, and indeed Afghans in general, are fine strong men, whose looks verify their tradition that they are descended from Saul, King of Israel. Any one travelling up the frontier, and visiting the bazaars of Dera Ghazee Khan, Ismael Khan, Bunnoo, and Kohat, in the winter months, when a great number of the Frontier Afghans are driven by the intense cold out of their own hilly country, would wonder at their stalwart forms and handsome though dirty faces, set off by long curls. He would also wonder how these men, reckless of life and delighting in bloodshed among one another, could be kept in order by the authorities of England.

When they come into our territory they seem to be rather overpowered by the order they see everywhere around them, utterly unlike anything they have been accustomed to in their own country. They wonder why the great Commissioner Sahib, whom they see dispensing life and death in the court-house, and whose decrees, backed by squadrons of cavalry and regiments of infantry, have drawn money, or its equivalent, from the reluctant pockets of the most famous raiders of their tribes, should trouble himself to see personally whether the bazaars are kept clean, and how the markets are getting on. When they find that he can address them in their own language, they mutter, "Verily God is great, and the Nazaranees are a strange people!" European officers going round at all hours of the day and night, troops and commanding officers turning out regularly for parade, a thousand and one such things so increase their awe that they do not breathe freely until they are well out of the atmosphere of our laws, so much at variance with their own law of the sword. No doubt when they are again amongst their own hills they congratulate themselves on living under a happier and better dispensation, where it is one of a man's comforts that he may either kill or be killed, nobody minding which.

The frontier force is entirely under the orders of the Viceroy and Governor-General of India, and, in a certain sense, has nothing to do with the commander-in-chief. The general commanding the force, is nominated by the Viceroy, and receives his orders from the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab. The officer commanding the cavalry in the different garrison towns, inasmuch as all reports are made to him, is responsible to the officer commanding the station, for the peace of the Frontier. The reports are presented daily. They often run in this wise:

"Letter from repalder (native officer) Mahomed Ameer Khou, Fort of Secunder.

"To officer commanding Punjab cavalry, protector of the poor, distributor of alms, the brave and merciful, &c., and after many salaams. Be it known to you that on the night of——, a mounted messenger from the chief of the village of Vuzeerabad came with the enclosed letter. I immediately turned out the troop under my command, sending Duffalar (native sergeant) Kishun Sing with thirty troopers to guard the mountain passes nearest the village, while I proceeded as quickly as possible to the village. The Mullick (or chief) of the village reports that about the time of evening prayer, viz., at sunset, the Afghans of the Vuzeeree tribe came down from their hills, taking away forty camels, one hundred sheep, and twenty mares, killing one and wounding two of the inhabitants. They also carried away Hussun Bee-Bee (beautiful lady).

"The protector of the poor will excuse me if I tell him that the chief and the villagers vow vengeance, and have sent messages to the different villages of their tribe, as also to Bahadur Shah, chief of the Murwutees, to whom the woman was betrothed, to collect a force to raid the territories of the Vuzeerees. I reminded them that the Sirkar (Government) would protect them; but would be very angry at their fighting. They said that they were disgraced men already by the capture of Hussun Bee-Bee, that shame sat so heavily on them that they would fight and die, and that it was the same to them whether they were killed by the Sirkar or the Vuzeerees. My Lord will pardon me; but it might be advisable that either my Lord or the brave Deputy Commissioner Sahib should inquire into it at once, as my Lord well knows that Bahadur Shah is of a hot temperament, and that the Murwutees are a large and brave tribe. Moreover, the woman is reported to be very beautiful.

"What more can I say? This letter is from the slave, and may God grant you a son (a common salutation). I have left three troopers of the Mounted Militia to report instantly to my Lord if the tribes are gathering."

ENCLOSED LETTER.

"From Ahmed Shah Mullick, of Vuzeerabad, to the brave Commander of the Fort of Secunder.

"Come quickly. I and my tribe have eaten dirt. The vile thieves of the Vuzeeree tribe (may the curse of Allah rest on them), having

come down, have looted this town and deluged the streets with blood. Capim Khan, the faithful, is the bearer of this letter. What more can I say?"

The above letters would be sent off at once to the offices of the Deputy Commissioner; or, if the Cavalry Commandant think the case of sufficient importance, he starts off to the Deputy Commissioner himself. After a friendly chat, it is agreed, most likely, if the place be within thirty or forty miles, to go off and inquire into the matter. Tents are soon packed and sent off on camels, while mounted messengers ride away in all directions with perwanahs (or orders) to the different forts, chiefs, and villages, to assemble troops. Early next morning the Commissioner and Cavalry Commandant may be seen galloping off, with a mounted escort, relieved every seven miles.

When within half a mile or so of the village, they are met by troops and chiefs, and, perhaps, by a curiosity-loving and curiously mounted tag-rag and bobtail mob. Every one either possesses or can borrow, a horse.

Inquiries are made on the spot. This circumstance, coupled with the fact that European officers in person come to make the inquiries, shows the people that we are not to be trifled with. Letters are written to the different tribes informing them that Government has charge of the case, and therefore they must not take the law into their own hands.

The chief of the Vuzeeree tribes is ordered to return the cattle and the woman, and a fine is imposed.

If the above terms be not complied with, none of that tribe are allowed to come into our territory to sell their goods; those of the tribe who are already within our frontier, are turned out, and perhaps some of the principal ones are retained as hostages.

After this warning, and if the tribe still persist in bad behaviour, "an expedition" is undertaken. The villages of the offending tribe are burnt, their crops cut, and their cattle driven off. But whereas this is done in the face of the more than Abyssinian obstacles of the country, a good many casualties may be expected on both sides.

This is a most objectionable way of retaliation; but living as we now do at the foot of the hills, it is the one way possible. If we held any strong positions in the hills themselves, it might be different; for, if there were a chance of the raiders being intercepted on return to their own ground, they would think twice before swooping down upon our territory. But government shrinks from annexing any more territory, and also fears to enrage the Afghans. The latter objection may not have much weight, seeing that they already hate us as much as they possibly can.

There is a great deal talked and written about the Russians, and that it would be advisable to gain the affection of the frontier tribes, and use them and their territory as a barrier. Whoever bids highest and pays it, will be, for the time being, the favourite with the frontier tribes. But the Russians can hold out a bribe in the shape of plunder, which we cannot.

Any one acquainted with the frontier can fancy the keen savage delight of these wild and brave but poor people, in the hope of one day plundering the cities of India, Umritsur, Lahore, Loodianah, Mooltan, the land of the hated Sikhs; that race, who in the times of Runjeet Singh, the lion of the Punjab, caused many a Pathan warrior to bite the dust. An Afghan never lets a Sikh live if he can catch him in his own hills. Moreover, it must be remembered that the tradition of the times when the Pathans descended like a wolf on the fold, and returned laden with the plunder of Delhi, Agra, Allahabad, Benares, and other cities, is still fresh in their minds; nay, even so lately as the Indian mutiny in 1856, these wild warriors joined our standard by hundreds when they had some prospect of sacking the rich towns of India.

Raids on the frontier are of all dimensions, from a raid where a few cattle are stolen by a tribe, or part of a tribe, to a raid where the tribes assemble by thousands, as in the case of the Euzufsaie campaign of 1863. The people in the hills and plains of the frontier still lead the lives described in the first chapter of the book of Job, where the Sabean and Chaldean plunderers are mentioned. In general one or two officers from each of the garrison towns, on duty for a fortnight or a month at a time, travel through, inspect, and report at the end of their term on the outlying forts belonging to those towns.

In the cold weather the duty to some is pleasant enough, but from June to August the heat is almost intolerable. Shut up in a small fort, surrounded for the most part by stony tracks and barren wastes, a British officer looks with longing eyes in the direction of Afghanistan, where before him lie gloriously wooded mountains and valleys. The mountain tops are covered with snow, to which the Afghans, who in winter live in our territory, may be seen wending their way, with men servants, and maid servants, sheep and oxen, he apes and she apes, just as their forefathers the Patriarchs did thousands of years ago. They say that it would be next to impossible for them and their cattle to live through the summer in the scorching plains. The large birds, as geese and pelicans, seem also to have taken alarm at the approach of summer, and day and night armies of them may be seen and heard croaking with delight as they majestically fly in single or double file towards the land of Promise.

Much has been said of the barrenness of the interior of the frontier country. The border hills certainly are fearfully and wonderfully barren; but officers who have accompanied military expeditions into the interior of the Suliman Mountains have spoken with enthusiasm of the lovely scenery and climate in those hills, where Europeans could live as in their own dear land.

Yet let it not be supposed that officers, civil and military, living on the frontier must needs lead a very melancholy life. Frontier life is pretty well varied with amusements as well as duties; amusements keenly enjoyed by those who spend a great part of their lives in the open air.

There is hunting of jackals and foxes, and peradventure a hyena now and then, with thoroughbred English foxhounds; there is very good hawking, quail, snipe, partridge, and makhoor (wild goat) shooting. There are fishing, cricket, racquets, and in the hot weather swimming. Time passes pleasantly on until the time comes for two or three months' privilege leave, when away we go to spend our holidays in the lovely vale of Cashmere or the pleasant hill stations of the Himalaya Mountains. Even then, we are glad to get back to see how men and horses, hawks, and hounds, have been thriving in our absence.

The mode of travel is peculiar to the Punjab Frontier force, and is generally accomplished by a system of posting. Should an officer wish to proceed from one station to another—the stations are generally one hundred miles apart—he writes to a friend at the other end of his journey to post him half way. In case he is friendless, he writes to the officer commanding the station, when horses will be posted for him at intervals of six and seven miles. The traveller is supposed to have already got horses posted half way from the station he is leaving.

It may seem strange that horses should so easily be had for posting. But forage is cheaper than in the rest of India, and thus the necessity of visiting the frontier posts, joined to the natural love of horseflesh, causes frontier officers generally to possess at least two horses, while the cavalry officers own three or four. I have known an officer commanding a cavalry regiment to have seven horses, four of which were first-rate chargers. Men, too, who will not lend their horses never get the loan of horses for themselves; and this in a country where all travelling is accomplished on horseback is a great inconvenience.

The journey of a hundred miles is often done in one day, but oftener in two, unless the torrents are down, in which case it may be requisite to wait till they dry a little. But "If possible, move on," is the unwritten law of the frontier.

When the rivers are down (as they may be after only a few hours of rain), a traveller may be seen on the bank of the river with what seems to be a roll of leather under his arm; but which, after a deal of puffing, swells into a large bladder, commonly called a mussuck. Supported on this, after the manner of the ancient Assyrians and other people of the East, the traveller grasps his horse's bridle, and swims over with his steed to the other side.

Travellers on the frontier, if Europeans, are obliged to have a mounted escort with them. Stations of cavalry and mounted police are kept on the road by government for purposes of escort.

Officers invariably travel armed, for the Afghans like to boast around their camp fires, in their own hills, that they have spilled the blood of an Englishman. Many a fine fellow on the frontier has fallen before the knife or bullet of an assassin. Not long ago, a lady was shot at and wounded by one of these fanatics, who, before his execution, evinced great penitence: saying that he had mistaken her for a gentleman, as she wore a hat and had large buttons on her cloak.

SICK SILKWORMS.

There was lamentation among us boys in the High School of Dolehurst. Pet mania broke out amongst us with considerable violence. Some took to guinea-pigs, which came to grief; others preferred rabbits, which the master's gardener killed, and said it was the foxes; one or two fed pigeons, which flew away or fell to the cat. There was one youth, of a mercantile turn, who invested in laying hens, built up a coop in the playground, and made pocket-money of his eggs. At last most of us took to rearing silkworms; for the old mulberry-tree in the cottage garden offered us enviable facilities in the way of food. We hatched the eggs cased in flannel bags, comfortably in our bosoms, and kept the worms in card boxes on shelves among our books, to the horror of chambermaids; for the caterpillars would creep out, and they are not pleasant things to find upon the sheets. We had cocoons in abundance, and spun fine silk capitally. We reared new broods from thousands of eggs, and nearly converted the dormitory into a menagerie. The master rather encouraged us occasionally, by lecturing on silk, its uses, its origin, and manufacture. If we horrified young sisters during the holidays by an exposition of our pets—especially those in the flannel bags—we had something to say to the higher powers about the raw material of cassocks and bright ribbons. My father soon knew (from our erudite store) all about the two monks who, in Justinian's time, stole away some larvæ from Cochin China in the hollow of a cane, and thus introduced the silkworm into Europe. We could prove that Virgil was napping when he supposed that the Chinese combed silk from leaves of certain trees. We could and did explain what Horace meant by his bis tincta murice vestes, and proved to our cousins, most satisfactorily, that Roman ladies occasionally dressed in gauze, and were satirised by the fogies of old Rome. Our ugly pets were tolerated, and I now think kept us out of not a little mischief.

But at last misfortunes came upon us. Our pets sickened and died, transformed into mummies, desiccated specimens ready for a museum. At first, a single dark spot appeared on the back of the caterpillar; then the spots multiplied. The doctor, confidentially consulted, told us our pets had got "pebrine," or pepper disease. The caterpillars indeed looked as if some one had mischievously dusted them with black pepper (poivroine). By the aid of his lancet, he showed us that the blackness passed under the skin, all through the tissues, and into the blood. We saw it, even on the scales of the perfect moth. It was the veritable plague spot, for all the creatures attacked died —not usually, indeed, in the caterpillar state,

the greater number had strength to spin cocoons. Some survived to the moth state, and laid their eggs; but the eggs were addled or produced infected caterpillars—for the disease was hereditary—and they died before spinning. In a few months all our stock was dead. We procured eggs from uninfected schools, but these caught the disease, and died. Soon, there were no eggs or worms to be had, except from London fanciers; and even these died off. So at last we gave up our silk manufactory in despair.

This is exactly what is now happening in all the silk-producing regions of the world. The disease first appeared, or at least was first publicly noticed, in 1842, in Herault and Poictiers. Like other epidemics, it was erratic and irregular in its course. It utterly destroyed the broods of some districts, then skipped over others in the immediate neighbourhood, to break out with greater virulence beyond them. Often the strong and vigorous caterpillars were slain, while the unhealthy and the weaklings were spared. Whole establishments perished suddenly, without apparent cause. The pebrine germs seemed to be carried by air or wind. In 1858 the disease had spread so fearfully, and produced so much misery and distress, that the French Government commissioned M. Quatrefages to ascertain its extent, and, if possible, to discover a remedy. He could not find a single caterpillar in all the districts he examined, free from the disease. At first, like the boys at Dolehurst, the people whose livelihood depended on the produce of silk, sent to uninfected districts for eggs, and struggled on. Soon, all France became infected. Then, like a cloud, the disease fell on Lombardy, Calabria, and the rest of Italy; then on the whole of Spain, and the breeding districts of Germany. Supplies were sought from Turkey, Syria, and parts of Asia Minor; but the plague spot appeared in those regions too. In 1858 it had spread as far as the Caspian Sea, and into the heart of Persia. Next year, it had passed up and over the great Caucasian range. India and China—the native country of the silkworm—are now mourning over the rapid decline of a profitable industry. Such poverty and misery as followed the track of the oidium in wine-producing countries, or a deficiency of cotton in the manufacturing districts, of England, attend the course of the pebrine. The silk-spinners, silk-weavers, and ribbon-makers of England fear the collapse of a beautiful manufacture and the ruin of their trade, unless the spread of the infection can be prevented or obviated by the introduction of new silk-producing moths. The fear is not altogether groundless. In this case demand does not regulate supply; supply regulates the consumption. The consumption of raw and thrown silk in Great Britain has diminished from ten million twenty-one thousand seven hundred and sixty-six pounds in 1858, to five million two hundred and seventy-three thousand seven hundred and sixty-seven pounds in 1866. You can at once detect the pebrine invasion of a silk country by the decrease in its production. Thus, in 1857, China sent to England nine million pounds of silk; but the plague fell virulently on China in 1864, and in one year the quantity obtained by us from that country fell to three million pounds. All articles manufactured of silk have increased rather more than one-third in price, and the manufacturer now pays for raw Chinese Isatlee thirty-two shillings and sixpence, instead of nineteen shillings and sixpence; for Italian white Novi, forty-six shillings, instead of thirty shillings. Of all the silk-bearing countries in the world, Japan and Australia alone are now free. Should these become infected, silk garments may some day be reserved for princes.

Since the year 1855 a French entomologist, M. Guerin-Meneville, liberally encouraged by the Emperor of the French and the Acclimatisation Society of France, has specially endeavoured to introduce different species of silk-producing moths which do not appear to be susceptible to the disease. At the Paris Exhibition, he displayed a considerable quantity of silk produced by other species than the mulberry silkworm. The chief typical forms introduced by him are two: the Tusseh moth, with three subordinate species: and the Arrinda or Ailanthus moth, with two species. The Tusseh moth follows the vast range of the Himalayas from the most western limits of Bengal, through northern India and northern China, into Japan, where its best species is known as the yama-mai; the Ailanthus, also a native of India, is found indigenated in Japan. The two types differ essentially from each other in size of the body, colouring of the wings, and nature of the cocoons. The full-grown caterpillar of the yama-mai resembles a number of fruit berries ranged side by side. I do not fancy it will ever become a favourite with school-boys. The caterpillar of the Ailanthus resembles that of the ordinary silkworm (Bombyx mori). The cocoon of the yama-mai is oval and closed all round, and constructed like that of the mulberry silkworm. The silk can be as easily, or nearly as easily, rolled off. The cocoon of the Ailanthus is open at each end, is wrapped up in a second silk covering open in front, and the silk is erratically laid upon it at the caprice or will of the insect.

The French moth requires a hot climate, and therefore cannot, for commercial purposes, be largely introduced into Europe. In India it is already an article of commerce, and can even now be obtained in considerable quantities from thence. The silk is hard and durable, and, woven into a kind of cloth called French doolhies, is worn by the Brahmins and other sects of Hindoos. It is said to be firm, brilliant, and always clean looking. The silk of the Ailanthus is soft, and either white or yellowish. It is spun or carded as cotton, and possesses such extraordinary durability that a single garment manufactured of it, outlasts the wearer's lifetime The Ailanthus moth, and two species of the

French moth may be reared in the open air in France and the southern districts in England.

Mr. Murray, from whose interesting report on the products of useful insects, shown at the Paris Exhibition, many of the facts above stated are gleaned, pronounces a decided opinion against the silk of these new worms, and doubts whether it is worth introducing for industrial purposes. He says the quality of the silk is coarse, ill-coloured, and not to be compared with the most inferior of mulberry silk. M. Guerin-Meneville now entertains what probably is a true estimate of the value of Ailanthus silk. "As to textile matter," he says, "if we can get it thus at a very low price, it will hold a middle place between silk and wool under the name of Ailantine, and appears destined to become in France what it has been from all time in China—the silk of the people." It would be pleasant to possess a clean "brilliant" garment which would last all a lifetime, and the introduction of such a material would be a boon in hard times. Whether the silk can be produced in quantities sufficient to affect the market and manufacture, will soon be ascertained by the results of the great Ailanthus silk farm sanctioned by the Emperor of the French, and watched over by M. Guerin-Meneville himself.

Mr. Murray believes that pebrine is maintained and propagated by the efforts of silk producers to retain their occupation. By the introduction of new eggs into an infected locality, pebrine is supplied with materials on which to feed. This epidemic differs from all others ever known. The remedy suggested by Mr. Murray is a severe one, and not likely to be tried except in the last resort. He proposes that the production of silk should be absolutely given up in every infected district until the disease is killed by starvation. When all its food has died out, the plague, he thinks, will die out too.

Analogy, however, teaches that epidemics depend very much upon carelessness respecting sanitary rules. Disinfectants, thorough cleanliness, and ventilation, overcome, or mitigate epidemical diseases. Cholera disappears before pure, wholesome water. Fever flies from a well-drained district—the oidium has been overcome by a liberal application of sulphur. There is no record of any efforts being made to purify and disinfect the great silk menageries of France and Italy.

ENGLISH LIFE FRENCH PAINTED.

A NOVEL entitled Le Dernier Mot de Rocambole, by M. Ponson du Terrail, was published in Paris about two years ago, and met with an immense circulation. The plot, which is of a very complicated character, need not be described here, as we have only to deal with that part of it the scene whereof is laid in London. It is desirable to mention that, at the time when this novel appeared, Thugs were the rage in Paris. There were Thugs in the feuilletons, there were Thugs on the stage, the exploits of Thugs were recorded in the patter songs of the cafés-chantants. In accordance with the prevailing fashion, the Thugs form no inconsiderable portion of the dramatis personæ of the Dernier Mot de Rocambole.

Now, the arch Thug of this work resided, not, as might be supposed, in India, but in London, which city he had chosen as a favourable locality for his human sacrifices to the bloodthirsty goddess Khaly or Kâly. He is described as occupying one of those elegant châteaux whose sloping verdant lawns (boulingrins) adorn each side of that lovely rural thoroughfare the Haymarket; and of so pious a nature is this aforesaid Thug, that he has fitted up one of the rooms of his house as a luxurious temple, wherein he worships a gold fish, supposed, according to some Indian doctrine of metempsychosis, to enshrine the soul of his father.

Rocambole, the hero of the romance, although endowed with muscularity sufficient to qualify him for the pages of Mr. Kingsley, goes about London in great danger from the Thugs, and has consequently invented a collar of tough hide, which saves him on many occasions from the strangling handkerchiefs of those murderous fanatics. To follow him through a tithe of his numerous adventures and hairbreadth 'scapes in all parts of London, from Le High Park to the aristocratic quarter of Wythe-chapelle, would far exceed our limits; but, as peculiarly illustrating the present subject, we may mention that his greatest dangers arise from his love for, and pursuit of, a beautiful gipsy, one of a tribe who pitched their canvas tents under the shadow of St. Paul's Cathedral, until, warned by the policemans, they were compelled to move to a desert spot situated some quarter of an hour's march from that locality—probably about the site of the Elephant and Castle—where they were allowed to celebrate their weird and mystic rites by torchlight. It is to be noted that, according to such French authorities, torchlight scenes are very common in the ill-lighted streets of London. This is a simple statement, without exaggeration, of incidents which the author of Rocambole describes as occurring in London in the present day.

Apropos of Thugs, a more elaborate account of the doings of those worthies, both Indian and British, is contained in a feuilleton, called Le Procès des Thugs, which appeared in the year 1866, in the Petit Journal: a Paris paper. This work of art purports to be a report of the proceedings in the supreme courts of Calcutta and Madras, under the presidency of Lord Bentick (sic), against many thousands of Thugs, native and British, of whom several hundreds were condemned and executed. One Feringher is the principal native Thug. Of the British Thugs, perhaps the most remarkable are Miss Clary Trevor, a young lady of great beauty and questionable morals, aud a certain Gilbert Patterson. The scene in which the latter confesses his crimes in open court, touches the climax of absurdity, and is worth quoting.

Sir Temple, an English gentleman who has been captured by the Thugs, but has made his escape, deposes, when under examination, to having seen three Englishmen in communication with the Thugs, two of whom he failed to recognise, but he states that the third is Gilbert Patterson, the valet de chambre of Lord Bentick. His lordship immediately sends for Patterson, and then and there questions him as to the truth of the charges preferred against him. This, it is to be observed, is done in his capacity of judge, sitting in open court; in accordance with British law, which, as we all know, supposes an accused man to be guilty until proved innocent. Patterson, with deep emotion, confesses that he is affiliated to the confraternity of the Thugs, and gives the following explanation of the fact. He states that the Thugs had obtained possession of his son, a little child, whose life they had consented to spare, only on condition that the father should join their band. He consented, and the Thugs further stipulated that each time he delivered up to them a European victim, he should be allowed to pass a day with his child. After this candid confession the following dialogue takes place:

Lord Bentick: And you kept your promise?

Gilbert: I did; the Thugs had made arrangements by which I could communicate with them, and when I could no longer resist my desire to see my child, I betrayed an Englishman to them.

Lord Bentick: How did you accomplish your purpose?

Gilbert: I stole some of your paper, and, after practice, succeeded in imitating your signature. When I wanted a victim, I wrote in your name to some resident in a distant town, commanding him to wait upon you without delay, and to bring the letter with him, in order that he might obtain an instant audience. The Thugs warned by me, awaited him on the road, took from him the letter, and—you can guess the rest.

(It required all the authority of Lord Bentick to restrain the audience; as to Gilbert, after he commenced speaking he was no longer the same man; he stood proudly erect, and a mad exultation gleamed in his eye.)

Lord Bentick (hesitatingly): And how many days did you pass with your son?

Gilbert: Ninety-three in three years!

Great light is also thrown on the doings of the Thugs, by Bob Lantern, another witness, who, when questioned by Lord Bentick (who conducts all the examinations himself), is invariably addressed by that functionary as Bob.

So much for English manners as illustrated in French sensational romance. Let us now refer to an equally accurate picture by a journalist.

It may be remembered that in October, 1866, a glove fight between two English pugilists, which took place in a sporting public-house in the vicinity of the Haymarket, resulted unfortunately, and, by an accident, in the death of one of the combatants. This occurrence was described in a paragraph extracted from the International, which went the round of the French papers, shortly after it took place. The paragraph was headed Les Boxeurs de Londres, and contained not one word to show that the so-called prize fight was a sparring match in gloves. It opens thus: "A fight à l'outrance has taken place between Edward W." (it is unnecessary here to give the name in full) "and another pugilist, behind Carlton-gardens near the Duke of York's column; this time it occurred in the midst of London by gas-light." A sensational description is given of the commencement of the fight in a public-house *du West End* in the presence of numerous men and *women*. The blows are described as "falling thick as hail, a tooth is broken here, a jaw-bone smashed there," and the spectators, especially the women, are said to have vehemently applauded any particularly crashing hit delivered by either party. After the fight had continued for an hour and a quarter, the closing time of the public-house arrived, and the boxers, with the whole of the audience, adjourned to the "neighbourhood of the residence of M. Gladstone close to the Duke of York's column," and the fight was again carried on for an hour, at the close of which W., compelled to succumb, was carried to the hospital, where he shortly afterwards expired; and his corpse is said to have been so mutilated that his wife could only recognise it *by his clothes*. The paragraph concludes as follows: "It was on Thursday, the 11th of October, in the year of Grace 1866, at two paces from the Strand and Regent-street, the most densely peopled thoroughfares in London, that this scene took place."

Let us now cite an instance from the drama, and describe the plot of a piece produced in Paris on the 18th of February 1860, at the Théâtre de la Gaieté. It exhibits, perhaps, a more remarkably delicate knowledge on the part of two dramatists of no mean celebrity, of the laws, manners, customs, and geography even, of the country in which they have laid their plot than could be easily found elsewhere within the same compass.

The drama, in five acts, is entitled Le Prêteur sur Gages (The Pawnbroker), and is the joint production of Messieurs Anicet-Bourgeois and Michel Masson.

Some time before the opening of the play, a certain Maître Francis Bob, a rich London pawnbroker and receiver of stolen goods, has quarrelled with his son for marrying a woman without money. Bob junior and his wife, discarded by their wealthy relation, fall into evil courses, and, with their little daughter Nancy, seek refuge from the myrmidons of the law in a notorious quarter of London called Jacob's Isle. The daughter, when in search of food for her parents, is captured by "les watchmen," and, although *put to torture*, refuses to disclose the hiding place of her parents. The latter are captured, however, and transported to Botany Bay; while Nancy, as the offspring of convicts,

has, according to a well-known English law, been taken charge of by the state and imprisoned in the London Penitentiary. Maître Bob has conceived a strong affection for his grandchild, and it has become the principal object of his life to effect her release. In the first scene, the pawnbroker receives a visit from one of his clients, Sir Edward Barckley — generally called *Sir* Barckley, sometimes *Mr.* Barckley, and on one occasion *Milor* Barckley. Sir Barckley has recently been wounded in a duel he has fought with one Henry Mildred (jeune professeur), who has eloped with his (Barckley's) cousin, Anna Davidson, niece of the rich Miss (sic) Lady Davidson. Mildred having fled to escape the consequences of the duel, Sir Barckley has, with his servant Buttler, deposed before the justices that Mildred attempted to murder him; Mildred has, therefore, in his absence, under another well-known British statute, been sentenced to transportation as a contumacious person. Now Sir Barckley happens to live next door to the "attorney-general," and *consequently* possesses great influence with that functionary. Bob, therefore, endeavours to induce him to obtain the release of Nancy, promising him, if he succeed, to relieve him from a debt of one thousand pounds. Sir Barckley, however, fearing to lose cast by acknowledging his acquaintance with the pawnbroker, declines. Subsequently Mildred calls on Bob, to pawn his watch. Bob, who has recognised him, resolves, as he has failed in his endeavour to *get at* the attorney-general, to try another exalted legal functionary, "the sheriff," and prevails upon that officer to release Nancy upon his betraying Mildred. Mildred is accordingly given up; but Bob's little scheme with reference to Nancy is frustrated, in consequence of that precocious young lady, *aged eight years*, having made her own escape unaided, and proceeded to Botany Bay to join her parents. Bob is therefore obliged to content himself with a pecuniary reward of one hundred pounds, and the unhappy Mildred is removed, in charge of le constable and les watchmen, to Botany Bay.

After the lapse of fourteen years, Mildred, then known as Marcus, manages, by the aid of Nancy, to escape from Port Jackson, Australia, and together they swim to a vessel bound for England. It should be here remarked that Buttler (Sir Barckley's servant), who has also been transported, on his death-bed furnished Nancy with a written statement that Mildred is innocent of the crimes imputed to him.

Anna Davidson has, after the transportation of Mildred, given birth to a son, which she confides to the care of a peasant woman known by the peculiarly British name of Noémi, while seeking subsistence as a governess. Her aunt, Miss, Lady, or Milady, Davidson, as she is indifferently called, finds out Noémi, persuades her to inform Anna that her child is dead, and procures his admission to *Greenwich Hospital* (L'hospice des orphelins de Greenwich), which asylum, our authors evidently suppose to be situated at the sea-side, as appears by a dialogue which takes place on the spot. The boy is there brought up under the name of Olivier, but is nick-named Patience, on account of the serenity of his temper. Previously to the death of Milady Davidson, which occurs at about the time of the return of Mildred to England, her ladyship, relenting, makes a will, leaving the bulk of her fortune to the son of Mildred and Anna; but, fearing that the son might inherit the supposed bad qualities of his father, she makes a proviso that he is to forfeit the bequest, if he be proved guilty of any dishonest or shameful action.

The remainder of the story is devoted to the efforts of Mildred and Miss Anna to discover their child, whom they believe to be alive, and to the efforts of Sir Barckley, assisted by his friend Bob and a minor villain, called Le Matois (the sharper), to involve Olivier in a breach of the law. One scene in which Le Matois, accompanied by Olivier, visits by night the house of Mr. Bolton, a lawyer, and attempts to steal therefrom Milady Davidson's will, and in the course of which Olivier is fired at and wounded, affords rather strong evidence that one of the authors of the French play, at least, is not wholly unacquainted with the novel of Oliver Twist. Thanks, however, to the watchful care of Nancy, who, restored to her grandfather's house, spends her whole time in frustrating these nefarious schemes, Olivier is kept from harm, and eventually succeeds to his great aunt's property. Towards the close of the drama, Bob, touched by Nancy's remonstrances, resolves to pass the remainder of his days in the practice of virtue, and, with that object in view, agrees with "the sheriff," for *a handsome pecuniary consideration*, to deliver up to justice all his former dishonest acquaintances, at a farewell supper to be given by him. This plan, however, becomes known to Sir Barckley, who attempts to blow Bob up with gunpowder, but who only succeeds in blinding him. Bob ultimately shoots Barckley in the presence of le sheriff, les watchmen, and "the people with torches," who have arrived on the scene with the view of arresting Mildred, and who do not appear to consider Bob's proceedings as in the least irregular. Neither do they appear to be of opinion that, Barckley disposed of, it is at all necessary to execute their warrant against Mildred. That individual then tumbles into Anna's arms, declaring himself perfectly happy, and—the curtain drops.

AN ANONYMOUS DIARY.

The subsequent memoranda, are gleaned from the fragment of a manuscript diary which fell into our hands among some old papers. It is paged from eleven to two hundred and thirty-eight, the beginning and the end having been alike torn away. Even the name of the diarist is unknown to us, but he would seem to have been a Scottish naval surgeon, settled or stationed at Spanishtown, Jamacia, during the years 1783-4; and, from amid the entries of his

professional visits and prescriptions for yellow-fever, sunstroke, ague, hydrophobia, and "all the ills that flesh is heir to," his business accounts and so forth, all of which are recorded pell-mell with notes of riots, hurricanes, duels, debauches, card and dinner parties, we have selected the following passages. They may serve to interest the reader, as showing something of the inner life of a Jamaica doctor in those days.

The names of many old naval and military men who afterwards won honour, occur in the volume. We were then engaged in the war which began in 1775, and in which our insurgent American colonists were afterwards abetted by France, Spain and Holland, and when the population of Jamaica consisted of somewhere about thirty thousand whites, ten thousand free people of colour, and two hundred and fifty thousand slaves.

The notes or additional memoranda to each name of interest, are added within brackets to preserve the context of the little narrative, which in some parts is amusingly literal, especially in its bibulous statements.

Jamaica, 1783—1784.

May 30th. We dined at Brown's, a very excellent dinner, and fine claret; drunk too much; cards in the evening; supper at nine, sat till ten smoking, and went to bed rather drunk.

31st. Got up at four A.M.; put K.'s horses to the phaeton, and left Smith in bed. Visited in the forenoon; dined at Hibbert's; visited in the afternoon, being disagreeably affected after last night's debauch. Admiral Pigot sailed the . . . . . . [The admiral then commanded the Jamaica fleet, having succeeded Sir George Romney. His flag was on board the Formidable.]

June 1st. Very hot; visited in the evening; still sleeping in the cott.

2nd. Visited Liguanea; began to feed the horses on biscuits.

4th. Hamilton dined with me; drunk too much of Peter Mitchell's claret, which we found very good.

10th. Strong breezes; dined at Mr. Mure's; lent him the first volume of Gibbon; drunk moderately; the night's so hot one can't sleep.

12th. Strong breezes; the three Hibberts and Fisher dined with me. Dinner so badly served that I am determined to discharge Polly. A concert in the evening; supped at ten; sung catches, drunk and smoked till two, when I went to bed very drunk, and vexed with Polly for spoiling the dinner.

23rd. The Augustus Cæsar, Alarm, and Diamond sailed this morning. [The Diamond was a thirty-two gun-ship, then commanded by Captain Charles Parker.] It rained and blow'd hard in the night; slept in the chamber, as the closet leaks.

25th. Captain Fairfax sailed for New York, in the Tartar of twenty-eight guns. [George William Fairfax, Captain R.N. 1782, admiral and knight banneret; latterly Flag Captain of the Venerable at Camperdown.]

27th. Cupid came home; having left George-estate, not being well treated. Dined at home solus; to bed at eight.

July 3rd. Angry with Dr. Grant for decrying our bark to our patient Hobb. Home early; to bed feverish.

4th. Visited; drank too much; music at Mitchell's; to bed early quite free from fever.

6th. The Andromache French frigate came in yesterday from the Cape. [L'Andromaque forty-eight. In 1796, this vessel was driven on shore near Arcaffon on the coast of France, by the squadron under Sir John Borlase Warren, and destroyed with three hundred men on board.] Tried the effect of red bark among the hospital patients. At ten A.M. went with Haylett in a wherry to visit Small at his fort; overtaken by a heavy squall of wind and rain, and were almost running upon rocks. Dined, and sat till six; almost on the rocks again; but got into the fair way; stood over to Port Royal and got under the Admiral's stern; rowed up to town, when the stupid coxswain run us ashore at the Point; did not land till near eleven. Clear moonlight. Found Cupid at "the shop" with the chaise.

7th. Feverish from cold in the boat last night. Fresh breezes. Visited. Come home and beat Jenny for mislaying my spectacles.

9th. Strong breezes. The Prince William sailed for London this morning, and carried two turtles and my letter to Will Hibbert. At Thomson's tavern—a bad dinner.

14th. Visited Silveras Penn. Dined at Doddington's coffee house. Blistered Taylor as the fever has continued fifty-six hours. Allan Maclean arrived from the Havannah. Bell and Latouche robbed of seven or eight hundred pounds at their store.

17th. Taylor's fever still continues; he took forty-nine more of the powders at two doses. Went to Bruce's concert, stayed till ten.

19th. Taylor very low and weak. Made his will.

20th. Dr. Grant married Miss Hitchman last night, and to-night the cat kittened.

25th. Taylor free of fever. Visited Dr. Grant's wife. Discharged Morton, with nine doubloons for nine days' attendance. Small returned from the Fort.

27th. Dined with Dr. Grant and his young wife, a very pretty and agreeable woman.

28th. Dined solus upon eggs and spinnage; drank only a bottle of ale.

30th. My horse lame; John employed in breaking the Spaniard. Mr. Lachlan Grant, the overseer on the Dalvey estate, very ill.

August 6th. Free from fever. Received a letter from Captain Leslie, dated on board the Torbay, seventy-four guns, Halifax, June 21st last. She had sprung a leak at sea on the 3rd, and was obliged to bear away; luckily got in on the 16th. The Tankerville Packet arrived yesterday; no news or any arrangement for the troops.

7th. Up at gun fire. Called in Dr. Grant to Mrs. Banks, who has a hectic fever with a bloated and dropsical appearance.

8th. The Sally transport sailed this morning.

13th. Took a purging ptisan very early; went to bed at nine with a belt round my body.

15th. Paid d'Aguilar thirty pounds for the Spanish horse.

30th. Opened the abscess in Ward's liver. Dined at Hogg's and drank too much.

22nd. Jopp's fever still continues. Filled the porter hogshead with rum.

28th. Dined with Dr. Grant. Mrs. G. sings well. Ledwich died at eight P.M. Drank too much at Hogg's.

September 1st. Tankerville Packet sailed. Colonel Hunter and Delpratt, passengers.

22nd. Letter from Andrew Drysdale at Panmuir, Forfarshire, desiring that I will take care of his son, whom he intends to send out here.

29th. Visited, and went to Mitchell's christening-ball; Miss Brooks and Miss Hutchison were the two prettiest girls in the room. Look on at the dancers and card players.

October 14th. Woke with a headache after last night's debauch, and visited Mrs. Aaron Silvera at the Penn. A hot ride. Obliged to write a letter to Mr. Wildman, introducing Dr. Patown of the Seventy-ninth Regiment. [This was the old Seventy-ninth, or Royal Liverpool Volunteers, then stationed in Jamaica.] Dined at Hibbert's with the Admiral (Pigot) Sir Thomas Champney and all the captains. We sat late, and Small was seized with gout in his left hand and arm.

19th. John Robertson, the author, dined at Dr. Grant's; the admiral and twenty people there.

20th. I flogged Cupid for getting drunk and cutting me while shaving.

21st. Simon Gibb's Rosana (a negress?) stabbed in the belly with a bayonet by one of the town guard. Considerable tension all over the stomach with fever and difficulty of breathing.

24th. Visited. A negro child of Miss Raymond's died of hydrophobia. Dined at George Mowatt's, and came home without getting drunk.

26th. The transports with the troops sailed for England this morning. The town alarmed about mad dogs; three negroes died of hydrophobia after being bitten; one of them under my care.

28th. Bought twenty-eight yards of dimity for breeches.

November 19th. Lent the chariot to some Jewesses to carry them to Ximena's marriage with Lansado's daughter.

20th. Dr. Wood breakfasted with me; is advised to resign in favour of Mr. Weir, a young naval surgeon; to send his letter of resignation, when Lord Rodney has prepared the Admiralty to accept it. Lord Rodney has given [him] so good a character to the Admiralty that all Rowley's* attempts against him were foiled, and he was ordered not to interfere with the surgeon of the hospital in future. [This is the great admiral, the first Lord Rodney, conqueror of the Comte de Grasse, in 1782.]

30th. Daniel Moore died last night after being inhumanly stopped from going to sea, by John Graham, ne excat.

December 4th. Forty-five years old this day.

7th. Allan Maclean died of fever at five A.M. Visited. Home very drunk.

8th. Went to Maclean's funeral; a numerous company.

9th. Hibbert, Galbraith, and Coverdale dined with me; eleven bottles of claret; all drunk. Jack brought in from Clarendon with an intermittent fever.

20th. Quite disordered after yesterday's debauch, so sent the chariot to attend the funeral of S. Morris's mother.

25th. Up at seven. The negroes playing and singing in the yard. Dined at three on a shoulder of brawn; drank moderately. Six of us cut in at whist, for a dollar, and I won twenty shillings.

1784.

January 10th. Finished the pipe of wine I had from Fisher. It was now three years old. Admiral Gambier in the Europa, with the Iphigenia, Flora, and Swan arrived at 4 P.M.

19th. Tom Yates introduced Mr. Maine, the admiral's surgeon, to me. Admiral Rowley in the Preston, fifty guns, and Captain O'Brien in the Resistance, forty-four, sailed for England this morning. [The admiral, who greatly distinguished himself under Rodney in the West Indies, and was wounded and taken prisoner at St. Cas in 1759, died a baronet in 1790. Captain Edward O'Brien was captain of the Monarch under Admiral Onslow, in the great battle off the coast of Holland in 1797, for which he received a gold medal.]

25th. Called at Port Royal to visit Major Nepean; found him recovering from fever. [The major was a son of the Bothenhampton family, Baronets of Dorset.]

26th. Robert Hibbert introduced me to Admiral Gambier, whom I found a very agreeable man. We sat at Robinson's till seven; called upon S. with Norman, to ask him to dine with me on Wednesday. All the new captains dined at Robinson's. Renewed acquaintance with Pakengham, who brought me a letter from Captain McNamara. [Admiral James Gambier, of the Blue Squadron, commodore in North America in 1770 and 1778, succeeded Admiral Rowley in command at Jamaica in 1783, when the Hon. Charles Napier (of the gallant house of Merchiston) was his captain. The admiral died a commissioner of the navy in 1790. Captain John Pakenham and James McNamara both died admirals, the latter in 1802.]

27th. Admiral Gambier called, and left his card.

Feb. 2nd. Dined at Hibbert's with Admiral Gambier and his captains, &c.; sat late.

10th. Dr. Grant's child died at two A.M. A very severe shock [of earthquake] at half-past three, just before I went to bed.

* Admiral Sir Joshua Rowley, then commanding at Jamaica.

12th. Did not visit, but came home to get things ready for a concert, with Captain de Courcey,* &c., with two hautboys and a bassoon; played till nine; sung catches till twelve.

15th. Gave Captain Montague five pounds ten shillings for claret from the Cape. Dined with McGlashon; sat late; it rained hard. Tom Hibbert overset the chaise, which was broke to pieces.

March 6th. Very few sick. Dined at Harmony Hall, being the first meeting of the Old Union Club, revived.

18th. Mr. Fothergill, of Greenwich, sent me a pipe of Teneriffe for twenty-five pounds.

19th. Visited Major Nepeau, and dined on board the Flora with Captain (afterwards Admiral) Montague; sat till eight, and came to Greenwich in the barge.

21st. Dined at Galbraith's; home at nine, and flogged Cupid for not bringing the chaise.

24th. Visited Polly Stott's two sons, Tom and Frank, from Scotland; they came to Port Morant in the Minerva, Captain Spears, by whom I had a letter from Uncle John.

26th. Sir Thomas Champney, Mitchell, &c., dined with me; to bed rather drunk; have been living too fast for these few days back.

April 2nd. Packed up thirty-three dozen of empty bottles.

21st. Admiral Gambier apologised for his conduct to Guy, and all is forgotten.

27th. Captain John Stony applied for a court-martial on Tom Yates. [He was captain of the Flora, at Jamaica, where he died in 1784.]

May 8. Will Drysdale, a natural son of my brother's, who is an apprentice with Captain Spears in the Minerva, came up this evening, in his jacket and trousers. [From this we may perhaps infer that *Drysdale* was the name of the bacchanalian Diarist?]

22nd. Planted Guinea grass, and went to bed drunk, at nine.

25th. Visited. The Parnassus, from London, in forty-six days, confirms the accounts of the dissolution of the British Parliament.

June 2nd. Visited patients, and started two puncheons of rum, containing two hundred and twenty-two gallons and fifty gallons; mixed well together.

5th. Dined at the Union; General Campbell was there, and Archy Thompson made a most shocking president.

19th. Dined at the admiral's, with Mrs. Grant, Bartlett the Conjuror, &c. General Clark† to embark after the 5th of May.

20th. Dined with Hibbert for the first time since Bob sailed. A bad dinner; no wine! Charles Fox is returned for Westminster.

25th. Visited Tom Mure's brother, a captain in the army, arrived a few days ago from Philadelphia, on a visit to Tom; but, finding him gone to England, is determined to follow. General Campbell takes him in the Camilla, as he expects to sail soon; General Clark being expected daily. [Captain George Mure, of the 53rd, is the officer referred to.]

28th. Dined at Vernon's, with the admiral; gave us good wine.

July 4th. The difference between Captain Stony, R.N., and Tom compromised, and all reconciled. Officiated as steward at the assembly, and danced with Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Grant.

8th. Admiral Gambier sailed for England in the Europa, after a residence of six months only. It is supposed that he is recalled in consequence of some irregularity. He leaves the command to Captain Pakenham, the senior officer.

10th. An address from the town of Kingston, presented to the governor (General Campbell) on his departure, was carried up to-day by Simon Taylor.

13th. The governor, Mrs. Campbell, Miss Ramsay, with Captains Mure, Campbell, and Dirom, sailed for England in the Camilla, Captain John Hutt. [This officer was mortally wounded when captain of the Queen, under Vice-admiral Gardiner, in the action of the 1st of June, 1794. Captain Alexander Dirom belonged then to the 60th, or Royal Americans, stationed at Jamaica. He died a general officer after Waterloo.]

30th. Was called up to Mrs. Coxeter. The wind very violent. It rose to a perfect hurricane at eight, with heavy rain. The kitchen and all the offices blown down with a horrible noise. We all ran out. I lay down under the Penguin fence, and got wet to the skin. Remained there till ten. Kate and all the negroes ran off. Went to Boid's till the gale abated. To bed at twelve.

31st. All the negroes very much hurt and exhausted; many houses and fences blown down; many ships sunk, overset, run aground, or dismasted; a number of lives lost, and the town looking dreadful. The camp and barracks blown down, and several soldiers killed and buried in the ruins. The hospital blown down and one man killed.

Aug. 1st. Squalls from the sea in the night; great many sick. Called to Commodore Pakenham, Dr. Grant attending; a smart fever; so began the bark. Dismal accounts from the windward; provisions, plaintains, and canes all down, houses and works too. Meeting of the inhabitants to petition the governor to admit all nations with provisions and lumber. Negroes employed pulling old houses to pieces.

2nd. Dined at Dennis Pinnock's; home drunk, without visiting General Clark at Dunlop's. Accounts from St. Mary's mention canes and plaintains have suffered, and ships ashore in Port Maria and Anotto Bay.

8th. The governor directed the Revenue officers to *wink* at the arrival of foreign bottoms with provisions, &c. The hurricane has been felt over all the island, but most severely to the windward.

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* Captain of the Magnanim in the battle off the Irish coast, 1799.

† General Thomas Clark, colonel of 31st Foot.

12th. Dined with Commodore Pakenham; a large party; Captain Cawsor sings very well. Dr. Grant's niece, Miss Peachy, arrived from Bristol.

13th. The Shelburne packet arrived in thirty days. Admiral Alexander Innes appointed to the command. [This officer died at Jamaica in 1785.]

14th. Dined at Dr. Grant's; Peachy very handsome, but vain and conceited.

17th. The Thynne packet sailed this morning. Passengers, Latouche, Colonel Despard, and Captain Cawsor, sent home with news of the effects of the late hurricane upon his majesty's ships, store-houses, &c. [Despard was the famous Cato Street conspirator.]

20th. Captain Gambier, of the Swan, fourteen guns, arrived last night, and met with the disagreeable news of his appointment to that sloop by his father not being confirmed by the Admiralty, they having commissioned a Captain Cole for her, and ordered him back to his rank of lieutenant. [The more fortunate officer, Captain Francis Cole, died captain of the Revolutionaire in 1800.]

25th. Visited. Collison still mad; leaped over the fence of his lodgings, ran to his store, ordered his clerk away; called for his pistols, and committed several outrages in the streets.

28th. Six vessels from the Cape with flour. (Sic.)

Sept. 2nd. Nancy Delap almost well; I began electricity to-day. Dined at Guy's, a large party; sat late, and got drunk. The Bulldog, fourteen guns, arrived, commanded by Captain Marsh, with Captain Hunter, to supersede Gambier in the Swan sloop.

3rd. Dined with the commodore; home without visiting. Monsieur Bellacombe, Governor of Hispaniola, sent down a corvette with offers of help after the hurricane.

4th. Dined at the Union, with the lieutenant-governor, commodore, with all the army and navy.

7th. Dined with the commodore; the captain of the French corvette got drunk, and was put to bed.

8th. Vessels from America and Hispaniola arriving daily with corn, rice, flour, and lumber.

26th. Visited sixty-nine patients in the hospital.

Oct. 1st. Dr. Pugh murdered Mr. Clark, and then cut his own throat, in a fit of jealousy about Mrs. Wharcum.

15th. A row. Captain Ingledon confined, and Mr. Denison put in the stocks at the guard-house, by John Moore and Cathcart for a riot committed on Wednesday night.

20th. Went to the concert in the evening. Peachy Grant rudely declined speaking to me; I as rudely refused to sing a catch when asked by Mr. Dunstan, one of the stewards. We had almost a quarrel; but I was wrong, and went home very much distressed by these two circumstances.

21st. Unhappy all night about the two accidents at the concert.

30th. Settled fifty pounds four shillings and fourpence with D. Robertson for medicines. Dined at home solus, and went to the play, where more than one poor soldier was very well entertained.

31st. John Robertson and Coverdale died to-day.

Nov. 2nd. Dined with Dick Grant. The chief justice and several of the bar there.

3rd. Dined with the commodore; fatigued, and went to bed, instead of to the assembly, which was very brilliant.

7th. Aikman died, and Allan Maclean's brother Charlie is dying also.

9th. Visited. Mr. Black quarrelled with a Mr. Innes, surveyor on board the Guinea ship, at a sale of negroes, yesterday. Black—lately overseer at Liguana—challenged Innes; they met this morning on the race-course, and fired two pistols each. Innes was killed on the spot, and Black wounded.

12th. Visited. The sick list small. The assembly petitioned the governor to continue the ports open to the Americans longer than four months, which he waives by waiting till the limited time is expired, and then to judge of the necessity for prolonging it. Dined solus —visited, and home by seven P.M.

* * * *

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HESTER'S HISTORY.

A NEW SERIAL TALE.

CHAPTER XI. IN THE HOSPITAL.

"I KNOW Lady Humphrey," said Sir Archie, "I have met her and her son in London. The son is a good-natured young fellow enough. He informed me on one occasion that our mothers had been friends. From the way in which her name was received at home when I mentioned it—never connecting it in my mind with any person of whom I had heard—I should have thought that not likely to be true. The recollection of the woman is not pleasant to my mother."

"All bitter feeling has had time to be forgotten," said the Mother Augustine. "Judith Blake was poor and proud, handsome and a dependant, and there are many excuses to be made for such people. Stories will be exaggerated, and reputations whispered away upon very little. We will hope she is not a bad woman, but it is plain she has not the gift of winning affection. And that may be truly called a misfortune in itself."

"And this girl is dependent upon her, you say?" asked Sir Archie.

"From the few words I have gathered from her I should think so," said the mother; "that she is bound to her in some way and would be glad to escape. How much is the girl's own fault, I do not know, but that the lady has been foolish with her, and neglectful of her, we can guess from the circumstances which have led to her coming here."

"If all we have heard be true, or even half of it," said Sir Archie, "the girl is to be pitied. And she looks like a young creature who would need delicate handling. You must see to it, Mary. Take my word for it, she is worthy of your notice. I never met an eye more pure and simple, and there is much patience as well as energy in the habit of the features."

"It is true," said the mother; "though I did not think you could have observed so much in your haste."

"I do not often see a face like that," said Sir Archie; "and when I do it pains me to see such a face in trouble. It is sure to be left longer unrelieved than another, because it suffers without noise. I think you may safely take yonder little maid under your wing, sister Mary. The whole character of her bearing is true. She endures fear without losing self-possession, and she takes a favour in good faith and with all simplicity."

"It is pleasant to hear you say so," said the mother, "for I have thought much the same myself. I will take care not to lose sight of our protégée. And we will make ourselves her guardians: as far as the wise Providence permits us to be able."

In the mean time Hester lingered amongst her vines up so high, till the brother and sister passed out of her sight, from the paths in the garden down below. The next thing of interest she saw was a lay sister in her white veil and apron, with a basket of new laid eggs, coming down the long green alleys from some unseen home of hens. It did not occur to Hester's mind that this vision had any significance with regard to her own coming breakfast. But it was dinner-time with the inmates of St. Mark's.

The Mother Augustine had a little corner of her own in her convent, a place where she transacted her business, where she had a right to sit in private when she liked; which the novices kept dressed with fresh flowers for her sake; which was called among the sisters the mother's room. It had no adornments but those flowers, and a statuette of St. Vincent, the guardian of poor children. One sole strip of carpet relieved the barrenness of the shining floor. There was no lack of papers and books, of sunshine when it was to be had, and there was generally a heap of pears somewhere on a dish of leaves; encouragement at hand for timid little ones, to whom the mother might find it necessary to talk, on occasion.

Hester was not, certainly, a child; yet the sweet fruits found their way to her plate. And the Mother Augustine herself poured the coffee into her cup, and dealt to her cream and butter, plums and apricots, with as much lavish nicety as if the furnishing and attendance upon delicate repasts were the most important concern of her life.

When the meal was over the Mother Augustine drew some sewing from a basket and fell to working in her sunny window. One might guess from appearances that she was

making flannel nightcaps to cover rheumatic jaws. A stool was found for Hester, who sat quietly at her knee. What was now to be said? The mother desired a confidence. Every stitch that she put in her flannel was aware of that. But Hester was not accustomed to being questioned about her circumstances, to making descriptions of her feelings. The mother had written to her friends at Hampton Court. Well, that had been said before. Still, the saying it again was better than silence; and, besides, such a common-place repetition might lead to other and more original remarks.

"It was kind to take the trouble," said Hester, "and I know that it was necessary to be done. But I will not go back to Hampton Court again. Help me, dear madam, that I may be able to keep away!"

"Have you other friends, my child?" said the mother.

"No other friends," admitted Hester; "but I am better without any."

"That is far too sad a speech," said the mother, "too sad, and not likely to be true." And she put her hand on the girl's shoulder, and looked searchingly and pityingly in her eyes.

"Don't!" said Hester, quickly, fairly turning her head away. "That is like your music. I cannot bear it. I do not know it, and it hurts me." The mother withdrew her gaze, and dropped away her hand to her side with a sigh.

"I must ask you to tell me something of your story," she said, "of your relations with these people, before I can make the venture to give you counsel."

So it all came forth at last, with reservations and hesitations it is true, for had not Lady Humphrey, after all mishaps, been a bountiful protector? And Hester was abashed at her own ingratitude, even as she felt herself begin to speak. Still the story of her childhood, her youth, her dressmaking experiences, and later young ladyhood, gathered shape out of the confusion of the telling, and made itself known somehow to the ear, or at least the mind, of the listener. Hester had hardly herself known before how well she had weighed each novelty, each event, each excitement of her life; been conscious of its unwholesomeness, been weary of its unlastingness, been indignant at, and oppressed by, the injustice that had forced it on her. The restless dissatisfaction had all been lying aching at the bottom of her heart. She had been patient with it, angry with it; had humoured it, and suffered from it; but she had never given it a voice before. The nun was amazed hearing her, that, being young, she had already so learned to think and speak. Hester was amazed, hearing herself, that, being old, as she felt herself, she had never so spoken her thoughts before.

"I am tired," she said, "of changes and shocks. I want to know how to think of myself. Every other person in the world has some place, but I am one thing to-day, and another to-morrow. If I am not to be a lady, I would rather be left alone to get accustomed to my level among tradespeople. And if I cannot be loved long, as I know I have no right, being so low, then neither have those people who are higher the right to insist upon loving me for a little while. Perhaps the peace of my life is as valuable to me as their whim of an hour is to them."

So the nun tried no further endearments. The girl in her present humour was not ready to put her trust in them; in her present excitement was, perhaps, not equal to the labour of fighting them off, according to the habit that had been trained in her. And the mother said, quietly, by-and-by: "We will return to all this another time. Now, if you please, you can come and see my hospital."

And the mother had a meaning in this abrupt diversion. Who, in sound health and the strength of youth, passing down those long rows of quiet beds, looking on the wasted forms, the shrivelled hands lying here and there listless on the coverlet, the marks of pain upon the weary faces, and detecting only now and then a half-checked groan or sigh, could help feeling confounded at the thought of his own impatience, his fretfulness about the shortcomings of his fate? He must forget his own sorrow; he must hang his head and feel ashamed "to sit down on his little handful of thorns."

Just once did the mother lead Hester round the wards where the patients lay in mortal pain, that her young restlessness might be abashed by the presence of real agony. It was also a sort of test to which she thought of putting this girl in whom she had found a new interest. If Hester shrank and retreated in a weak fear, she should know how to deal with her in pity. If the sympathy at her heart, and the awe and appreciation suddenly widening her mind, kept her foot unflinchingly on the sad track of pain to the end, then she should know how to deal with her in honour and in joy.

The mother passed softly up and down the little alleys between the beds, now wiping a poor moist face, now bathing a burning head, now holding the grateful cup between thirsty lips. And a broken word followed her here and there; sometimes it was "God——" and there was breath for no more; yet such crude beginnings of prayers as even this may find a listening angel at hand to take them up and put a finish to them in Heaven. Or perhaps it was only the living eloquent eyes that tried to speak while the tongue was already paralysed by the swift approach of death. And Hester, all the while, stood just a little way off, not afraid to be in such presence, but not daring to draw too near. The mother looked up at her sometimes with a smile of indescribable sweetness and approval, as she stood pale but strong, fixed in a sort of terrible rapture at what was passing.

"This is her daily work," thought Hester, her eyes filled with the graceful figure of the nun, taking in all the refinement and dignity of person and bearing which even the folds of harsh serge had obeyed so lovingly that them-

selves had become beautiful in clothing her; following the slim satin hand as it flitted to and fro over wild shaggy heads, laying hold of rough horny other hands, reducing all things around to a sort of order in peace, leaving hush and comfort in its track, as with the influence of a holy magnetism. "This is her daily work," said Hester, "and I——? I have been thinking about whether or not I was to live a lady!"

One dying woman, with the very print of death upon her face, was raving meekly about her home and her children; her husband, who was trying to keep things together till such time as she might be cured and come back to laugh over his troubles, his makeshifts, his helplessness, in her absence; about the baby who badly wanted the tender hands about his little body, who wailed now through the nights and would not let the neighbours sleep, but who would coo and be comforted when next she chirruped in his face; about the tender little daughter of few years, who had a burden upon her shoulders too much even for a woman to bear.

"And, mother!" she said, "Won't the good man be right glad to see me? And won't he be surprised to see me walking in to him? And how he'll be going to his work in the morning without the house and the children on his back as well as the hod of mortar. I'll be there some evening before him when he comes home. And won't the lonesome look go off his face. And won't he give me a kiss?"

So spoke the dying heart; with its little hopes so green and flourishing on the earth, while their root was already torn from them and shrivelling into dust.

"Oh, yes!" she said, in answer to the nun, "I'll be willing enough to go, when so happen the Lord may want me. But sure I am he doesn't want me yet. I couldn't go to heaven till I rear my little baby."

In another corner a candle was burning, two nuns were praying, and a soul was passing away. Hester and the mother knelt also at a distance, till the supreme moment of a fellow-creature was over. And a few minutes after, in a quiet passage leading from the ward, with a door closed between them and the dead and dying, Hester was weeping with wild sobs in the mother's arms.

"Let me stay with you," she whispered. "I am not much use now, but I might learn, and I could help."

"No, no, my dear, not for always, at least," said the nun. "You do not know what you are asking."

"I could make these black robes, dear madam," pleaded Hester. "And I could sit up at nights."

"Could you?" said the mother, smiling. "We will find you some more suitable work perhaps."

"Suitable for you, then why not suitable for me?" persisted Hester.

"People do not come here so rashly," said the mother, gravely. "They think about it long. They lay their case before God for years, and only make up their minds when they feel assured by long trial that he wants them to do his work in this way. Your call, I have little doubt, is elsewhere. Yet never fear but we will love you and protect you all we can. And you shall always be our sister, wherever may be your place, whatever may be your work."

The next ward visited was a pleasant room upstairs, a place in which the sick people were getting better. In one bed near a window a woman was propped up, with some needlework in her fingers; a white happy face, only newly rid of pain, newly enraptured with peace; two bony hands stitching feebly, the hair banded with smooth care, the head crowned with a snowy cap, the whole figure arranged with festive joy, and raised up out of prostrate weakness to give a grateful welcome to the return of life. A friend had come to see her; had brought flowers. A child sat between them reading aloud from a book. In another bed a fragile looking girl was lying dreaming about her mother in the country, dreaming with wide-open eyes that followed curiously all the gambols of the flies upon the ceiling. She wanted a letter written to her home. And Hester undertook to write the letter.

While that letter was getting written the mother was called away, and Hester remained sitting by the sick girl's bed; who told her about the hills amongst which she had lived, about the pleasant wooded valley where her mother's cottage stood, about her hens, and her dairy, her churning, and her gardening.

"And nothing would do for me," she said, "but I must come up to London to be a milliner. And my mother cried sore. And the town air choked me, after the wind that goes blowing through our hills. But now I am getting stout and well, and I will go back to the green fields. The sister gives me a little bit of lavender sometimes, and I snuff it on my pillow here when my eyes are shut. And it has just the old smell of mother's parlour at home."

Meanwhile the Mother Augustine sat over her desk, in her little room.

A letter was unfolded before her, with the Munro arms at the top; and the date showed it written from the Castle of Glenluce, a full month before that present hour.

"Our dear Janet is a very sunbeam under our roof—so brilliant—so piquant——"

"Ah, that is not the place," said the Mother Augustine, and turned a page.

"It is a want we really feel in our seclusion"—yes, this was the part that the mother wanted to refer to—"in our seclusion." And the mother folded and straightened out the paper.

"Now that we go so very seldom to London it is most desirable to have a person at hand, who will really be accomplished at her needle. You know I like my gowns to fit nicely—a wrinkle annoys me. Then it is so difficult to wear out one's handsome dresses here, and one reads of the changes in the fashions—more fre-

quent than ever—and it is vexatious to sit down to dinner with fringe around one's shoulders, when one knows it is out of date, and one ought to have puffings, or falls of lace. I have talked upon the subject to your aunt Margaret Hazeldean, but it is of no use asking her advice upon such matters. She only laughs in a provoking way, and says the dressmaker in the village—the same who makes stuff gowns and petticoats for the farmer's wives—is quite good enough for her. Poor Madge has been the only person to sympathise with me till lately—and you know I never like to take an important step without support—but even she is so very odd, has so many fantastic ideas about embroideries and furbelows that we never could come to agree in our desires on the subject. But now that our dear Janet is with us—and likely, I trust, to remain with us for life—I think it is high time I set to work to supply this deficiency in our domestic resources. The dear girl has such exquisite taste, is so fastidious about everything she will wear—she is quite after my own heart in this; as indeed I may say in everything else. And apropos——"

But the mother went no further. She joined her hands above her desk, and leaned her brow upon them thoughtfully.

"I wonder how it would do," she said, softly to herself. "I wonder if they would be tender and kind to her, if I sent them a stray lamb to be folded at Glenluce!"

After pondering thus a little time longer, she drew forth a sheet of paper, with a sudden impulse, and wrote a letter of consultation to that very Aunt Margaret who could laugh so provokingly over the trouble of wrinkles in a dress, and who was simple enough to wear gowns made by homely village hands.

A letter about a Red Ridinghood who was flying from a wolf, about a young spirit that had been tried, a young heart that had known the danger of growing embittered, a young will that was resolved to do work. She said: "The case is an exceptional one. The girl would do her part, I believe, but I should in all respects require that she should be treated like a lady." The pith of the letter was, "Think, observe, question, and let me have your advice; by which I shall act, if that be possible."

And so it happened, that on an evening soon after this, in a far distant house near the village of Glenluce, a face that was soon to shine on Hester's path, a bright dark face full of strength and sweetness, was bending over this letter with interested attention; considering the matter of its contents—which was the fate of Hester—wisely, sympathisingly, with all the earnestness and generous zeal of a strong fervent heart.

CHAPTER XII. HESTER'S CHARACTER DESCRIBED.

Lady Humphrey's carriage, rather dingy, though with a look important, was seen stopping, soon after this, before that black ancient archway in Blank Square.

Never in her life, perhaps, had this lady looked so beaming, so benevolent, so perfectly convinced of and satisfied with the generosity of the world, as in that hour which saw her present herself in the quiet reception room of the convent, to look after her charming Hester, and to thank that dear courteous abbess for her hospitality to the poor child.

"Ah, good madam!" she said to the Mother Augustine, while shaking her finger playfully at Hester, "how well it is for the world that such charity as yours is to be met with occasionally! When naughty girls get astray from their chaperones at balls, they do not deserve to be rewarded with such a treat as being taken into such a delightful home as this, being entertained by such a charming person as you. How shall I ever thank you enough? And your noble brother. You must please make my acknowledgments to Sir Archie Munro. I have the pleasure of knowing him slightly, through my son."

Now, behind Lady Humphrey's smiles there lurked a puzzle in her mind. Did this sister of Sir Archie, this daughter of Sir Archie's mother, recognise in her, Lady Humphrey, that Judith Blake whose young days were remembered amongst the elders of her home, who had truly not been approved in the days that were so remembered? If not, it would be well; but if luck were so far against her, then it would now be her part to remove, by appearing in a new character, whatever hostile or doubtful impressions might have laid their mark upon the mind of this good abbess.

"Such enthusiasts are apt to indulge charitable opinions," she reflected, and she set about winning the full faith of this new ally; for an ally in some shape or other Lady Humphrey had resolved that she must prove. She had once known an abbess before, but she was a homely old woman, with the poor of a country district under her wing—as homely as a hen among her chickens. But a young abbess like this must be of the kind known in poems; where she is usually found sitting with her back to a mediæval church window, with an unfortunate love story in the background of her life, a crushed heart ever open to the public inspection, and with an unhesitating belief in the virtue and misfortunes of all who may draw near to hear the story of her sorrows and see her praying by moonlight.

"It should be easy to manage her," thought Lady Humphrey, but looked in vain for the seraphic although heartbroken smile, the lackadaisical self-conscious drooping of the eyelids; listened fruitlessly for the half-smothered, tale-telling, egotistical sigh. This was no etherealised victim of romance whom Lady Humphrey had to deal with; and indeed the graceful young woman, in her black garb, was so very much, in very honesty, like the creature she had been born to be, to wit, the good guileless daughter of one—of two—whom Lady Humphrey could remember, that, albeit her ladyship held a stout heart within her body, she had some twitches at her conscience, some pains about her memory,

which threatened a persecution from unwholesome recollections.

It was ominous to Lady Humphrey to see Hester affect no joy at their meeting; to see her take a pale grave stand at her new friend's right elbow; to feel the confidence which already existed between these two, the conviction that her own late efforts to bind Hester to herself had failed, while that a stranger had accomplished in one night and a day what she could not effect through all the years that had changed a babe into a woman.

And Lady Humphrey was now in a difficulty. She wished to appear anxious to take Hester back into her arms, and yet she hoped that the nun might yet assist her in getting the girl transported into Ireland. She must let this daughter of Glenluce see the uneasiness of her kind heart; how she did long to keep the girl with her, be a mother to her, yet found herself disabled by circumstances from indulging this fond desire of her affection. It was impossible to do this while Hester was standing by so quiet and so resolute; so wickedly forgetful, it would appear, of all the gratitude and enthusiasm that was due from her to this tender benefactress of her youth. But Lady Humphrey was not to be daunted by a trifle.

"I must ask you, my love," she said, "to allow me to have a few words with this dear lady in private. You look tired, my Hester, after your raking and your fright. Go and rest, my dear pet! You need not weary yourself with attending to a tiresome conversation."

"To the garden," said the Mother Augustine; and Hester sat under a sunny wall with ripe plums about her ears, and saw the sun set in a fierce glare behind the city spires and chimneys, and heard all the clocks, from towers and churches, dropping down their music or their clangour, many times round and round, before Lady Humphrey's lean horses took their way out of Blank-square, and the Mother Augustine might be seen coming thoughtfully along between the lavender and the rose bushes casting about her glances, looking for some one.

But the conversation in the parlour had gone on somewhat in this way.

"You may have heard my name mentioned before, dear madam," began Lady Humphrey, cautiously, fully alive to the importance of being sure of the ground she trod, before venturing to take an excursion of any length into ways where she had any cause to doubt the foundations under her feet. Had the Mother Augustine said "no," she was prepared to back from her suggestion with some graceful apology. But the nun, not having a taste for the art of dissembling, gave her a knowledge of her position on the instant.

"Yes," she said, readily, "I have heard your name before, Lady Humphrey. My brother has mentioned it to me. And I understand, moreover, that you had some acquaintance with our family many years ago."

"It is true," said Lady Humphrey, pensively. "Ah! how pleasant it is after years have passed away to find the memories of one's youth still shared by friends, even if—as, alas! has been my case—those friends have been estranged from us. I knew your father and your mother, when they and I were boy and girls. I loved them dearly, as a sister, and I received much kindness from their hands. But I was a sadly wild girl in those days, my dear madam, and it was easy for evil tongues to do me a mischief if they would. Unkindness and interference divided us, and I fear much that cruel stories, perhaps provoked by my waywardness and foolishness, must have lingered at Glenluce with the memory of my name. But ah! how the world tames one, dear madam!"

And Lady Humphrey cast her eyes upon the backs of her nice gloves, and studied them with a sorrowful little smile, as though she saw her youthful follies mirrored in the shining kid, and compassionated them out of the depths of her mind, now grown so sage, of her heart, now grown so sober.

The nun smiled in good faith and good-humour. She was willing to believe all she could, through the charity of her desire.

"If all the world of the good were to be judged by the hastiness of their youth, Lady Humphrey," she said, "I fear there would be but few to receive honour or praise. It is after the battle that the victor is crowned. No fighting, no laurels."

Lady Humphrey glanced furtively at the mother's sweet, serious face, and was satisfied that her story had been fully known, that her apology had been received. She sighed, and resumed.

"Ah, yes! there is fighting needed, as you say, and it costs care and anxiety to the friends of youth before the training can be happily accomplished. I was even wilder, I believe, and more difficult to manage than that dear girl who has just left the room. And it is about her I would take your counsel, dear madam, knowing your charitable interest in all good works and honest cares. You see me with this poor girl. She is an orphan, and has depended on me for food, and clothing, and protection, since she could speak. I have educated her well, and yet of late I have found it necessary that she should be taught some means of supporting herself. I had wished, is is true, to make her independent of such need, but that is impossible. I cannot keep her as a daughter under my own roof, and this displeases her. Her tastes, alas! are beyond her station, and I tremble to think of the dangers which surround her in this great city. She is wild, I will own to you, and frets at my control. I fear she is not grateful. I fear she is inclined to be rebellious and a little vindictive. But, ah! dear madam! I need not tell you, who must know it so well, that we should not do good in this world through a seeking for gratitude. She is not a bad girl, I believe, only, as I have said, a little wilful and wild. You have

an example of it before you, my dear madam, in the circumstances which have brought her under your notice. I cannot even take her for a little amusement under my own wing without risk of some accident like this which has happened. And consider how dreadful it would have been, what distraction I must have suffered, had she fallen into less kind hands than yours."

The nun's face had been growing gradually very grave indeed as this recital went on.

"I am sorry to hear this of the young girl," she said. "She has seemed to me good and charming."

"Ah, charming she is indeed, madam!" said Lady Humphrey, sighing, as if that were the very worst of the whole story.

"And good, I think," said the nun, with a gentle persistence.

"Good, yes, surely, in the main—I trust so," said Lady Humphrey; "but so charming, as you say, and so impatient of control—alone, as she must be when following her employment, in London! Do you wonder at my uneasiness, dear madam?"

The nun was silent for some moments, then she said:

"Have you thought of any way in which I may be of service to this child? I presume that you have, since you have taken the trouble to inform me of so much."

Lady Humphrey felt her breath a little taken away. This nun would so bring her to the point. However, it could only have been conscience that made her so reluctant to speak out; for surely there could be nothing discreditable in her desire when it did come to be stated, though without much of that circumlocution which had been intended to accompany it.

"It is true," she said, boldly, "that I have wished to be able to remove the dear girl to some quiet country place, where she might be able to support herself in respectability, and also be removed from the dangerous excitements which lie in wait for her in London. And I confess, dear madam, that, knowing of your generous sympathies, and also that you have connexions in the country, I have been presumptuous enough to hope that you might interest yourself to assist me in so placing her."

The Mother Augustine brightened at this speech. Surely it held nothing unfair, could have no ungenerous motive lurking behind the judicious anxiety which prompted it. Perhaps, indeed, the Mother might have thought within herself, just in passing, that, had she been interested from babyhood in such a girl, she would not have been so eager to banish her from her presence. But this unacknowledged thought was in itself a little triumph for Lady Humphrey, seeing that here was only a small sin, and but a negative sort of misconduct, after all, wherewith to charge a person of whom many hard things had been said, and whom even she herself, despite the remonstrance of her charity, had not been able to meet without a prejudice.

"I thank you, Lady Humphrey," she said, warmly. "I am glad that you have placed this trust in me. It is true I may be of use in this way. I will do my best to find a home for the poor child. But there is one favour I must ask of you," she added. "I must beg you to leave Hester with me, here, for a few days. I shall the better be able to judge of her temper and capabilities."

Lady Humphrey was not altogether glad of this arrangement, but when so much had been gained she must relinquish a part of her will, must consent to run some little risk. And the worst that could happen would be too much confidence between the nun and Hester, too good an understanding on the nun's part of the foolish treatment which the girl had received. And Lady Humphrey felt instinctively that Hester would be somewhat likely to use some delicacy in dealing with her character.

And so, after having detained the nun in conversation for some time longer, ingeniously exposing the generosity of her own nature, and quite as clearly insinuating the instability of Hester's, Lady Humphrey at last made a most reverent farewell salutation to the abbess of St. Marks, and rumbled away in her old coach, out of the quietude of Blank-square.

And when all this was over the Mother Augustine sat thoughtfully in her little room; and afterwards took her way into the garden to seek Hester; and came gravely through the sunset light, between the lavender and the rose-bushes.

Vindictive, ungrateful, not to be trusted! Our Mother Augustine's kind heart was disturbed about her protégée. The lady, be she what she might, had spoken wisely, and her anxiety could scarcely be assumed.

If Hester were to prove wild, impetuous, not easy to be controlled? If she were to get herself and her friends into trouble wherever she went? What then? Why, disappointment of course, to those who had loved, and trusted in her; disappointment but never despair. She should fall seven times; and seven times be raised up again.

THE NORTHENVILLE ELECTION.

THE GAME IS LOST—AND WON.

My last move on the board ended in my utter discomfiture. I had gone to a great deal of expense, taken a great deal of trouble, thought I had won the game, and only to find my king in check, and the knight (Mr. O'Rind), with whom I had fully hoped to carry the day, taken by my adversary. I was by no means surprised to learn that O'Rind had taken his departure without looking me up, still less to read in the papers that he was about to sail from Southampton to join his appointment in Tansgoria, where he been named puisne judge as a bribe for not dividing the ministerial interests at Northenville. It was on the Monday afternoon

that I read of his appointment in the Times. By the early mail-train of Tuesday morning he left Northenville for town, and at noon that day the nomination of members for the borough took place.

The mayor of the town opened the proceedings in the usual form. His speech was not long, and was listened to with attention by the crowd. When he had finished, Sir George Staleybridge came forward and proposed Henry Mellam, Esq., of Narlands Hall, as a fit and proper person to represent the borough of Northenville in the parliament of the United Kingdom. Sir George was no orator, and, indeed, his views of men and things in general were as a rule somewhat misty. I had therefore taken the precaution to have the commencement of his speech written out for him in a plain bold hand, with a hint in it that, at a certain point, he might launch out in abuse of the ministry and its supporters; that he was to deem all men who voted against ministers to be independent, and to praise them accordingly. This part of his speech I left to his own invention, merely noting here and there sundry hints for his guidance. At one place he was told to "praise the church;" at another to talk of our "glorious constitution;" at a third to appeal to his hearers to come forward and support "everything that is dear to us."

Mr. Mellam's seconder was Mr. George Holstoff, eldest son of the great brewer (Buddel, Grongal, and Holstoff) of Northenville. Getting this gentleman to support us on the hustings was a piece of policy for which I took great credit. I have great faith in publicans at an election. In England they have as much influence upon a great number of electors as the priests have in Ireland. Now, to the publican the brewer—provided the two deal together—is very much what the Irish Roman Catholic bishop is to the priest. Get the goodwill of the Right Reverend Doctor, and his clergy will be your friends. Get a wealthy local brewer to support your candidate, and the publicans will follow his lead.

Not that Mr. George Holstoff knew anything either about the brewery or the publicans who bought so largely of his father's beer. He was a Cambridge man, had been called to the bar about five years, and was very fond indeed of airing his oratory whenever he got a chance. Beyond drawing his four hundred pounds a year allowance from his father's London banker, he knew nothing whatever of business. But his name was good. He was liked in the neighbourhood, and if a seconder can do a cause any good, he certainly was a good card for us to play. He spoke of the business-like habits and great local interests of Mr. Mellam, and contrasted these with the claims of Captain Streatham, whose only merit as a candidate (said Mr. Holstoff) consisted in the fact that he was son of the Earl of Basement, who was a cabinet minister, and that if the honourable Guardsman were returned to parliament, the electors of Northenville would "merely bind themselves hand and foot, body and soul, to support, right or wrong, through good report or evil, a ministry of which every honest earnest man in the kingdom was heartily tired, and who seemed to remain in office because they considered they had a prescriptive right to the treasury benches." There were not many of those who stood nearest the hustings that understood what Mr. Holstoff said; but his manner and way of speaking had evidently considerable influence upon them, and they cheered accordingly, the more so as most of them were pledged supporters of Mr. Mellam's. I had taken care to have my forces up early, and with improvised breakfasts in their pockets, they had surrounded the hustings before the enemy was aware of their movements. The morning was cold, and at all the public-houses in our pay were hung out notices that early purl was to be had within. For a pint of this, when payment was offered it was refused; and every man wearing our colours—mauve—was served with a pint of purl and a good crust of bread, with a piece of cheese, to keep the cold off his stomach. The advantages of thus providing for the commissariat of our troops will be seen hereafter.

When Mr. Holstoff had finished speaking, Mr. Hodgson (the cheesemonger, to whose wife Lady Vance had sent medicine for her baby of the same kind that was used in the royal nursery), came forward to propose Captain Bertram Streatham, "commonly called the Honourable Bertram Streatham," as a fit and suitable person to represent the borough of Northenville in parliament. Thus far the worthy tradesman was allowed to proceed with his speech, but hardly a word more was heard. At a prearranged signal from me as I stood on the hustings, our supporters began to shout and roar at the top of their voices, and make playful allusions to the business of the speaker, and his supposed shortcomings in dealing with his fellow-men. "Now old Double Gloucester, how many ounces go to the pound?" was the first salutation which he received, and many more in the same strain would no doubt have followed had I not by a motion of my hand shown the free and independent that stood below the hustings that Tom Spavit stood near me. Of course, this was the signal for a long series of personal remarks about Spavit's well known financial troubles, questions being shouted out as to when he was last at the County Court, how much he owed for blacking, whether he got credit for the new hat he had on, and asking what tailor had suffered by "booking" the evidently new top-coat he wore. This hubbub lasted nearly the whole time of Mr. Hodgson's speech, during which was heard now and then the words "fit and proper person to represent this our famous old town;" "connected for several generations with the interests of the county;" "well known to my fellow electors;" "gallant officer;" "consistent supporter of ministry;" "upholder of the people's rights;" and so

forth. The captain's nomination was seconded by Sir James Wallsend, a young baronet who had lately come of age, and had succeeded to a very large property in the neighbourhood. Sir James was a good-looking, open-faced young fellow, a fair speaker in his way, and who looked as if he could have knocked down half the men in the crowd. He was just the sort of man to take with an English mob, who, with all their faults, admire any one who is manly in appearance. He was, moreover, a relative by marriage of Captain Streatham's, for his mother and Sir Charles Vance's mother (both dead) were sisters. The other side had selected him to second their man for several reasons, but chiefly because of his looks, his connexions with the Vance family, and his being able to speak about Captain Streatham, who held a commission in the same regiment as himself.

Sir James did not make a long speech, nor did he dwell much upon any political question of the day. He evidently made a set at the publican or sporting portion of the electors, and assured them that if his relative and friend was returned for their borough, he would do his best to resuscitate the Northenville races, which had been allowed to fall away for the last half-dozen years. He pointed out how much more easy of access the town was now than it had been formerly, and ended by saying that he hoped next year there would be a large influx of visitors to the place, and that the members' cup, given by his worthy relative and brother officer, would form one of the prizes to be run for. And having said his say, Mr. Mellam came forward to make his bow and speech to what he hoped would be his future constituents.

As I have said before, at an English election personal appearance goes for a great deal, and in this respect both the candidates for Northenville had nothing to be ashamed of. Mr. Mellam was a man of one or two-and-fifty, rather bald, slightly grey, clean shaved except a pair of not very large whiskers, and with that peculiarly English appearance only seen in this country, and more seldom now that so many wear beards. He began by thanking the electors for having asked him to come forward and contest their borough, with which he had been so long connected, and from the neighbourhood of which he hoped never to move during his life unless to attend to his duties in parliament, if they did him the honour to elect him. This, of course, was hit number one at his opponent, whose best friends could not deny that he was a rolling stone. Mr. Mellam said that he did not seek election for the purpose of getting any place or situation (hit number two); he had his own interest in the ironworks to attend to, as they very well knew, and those were occupation enough for him (hit number three at the other side) if the day were composed of forty-eight instead of twenty-four hours. He had never been an idle man (hit number four), as all his hearers knew well, and now, if returned to parliament—if honoured by being named their representative—he would work much harder than he ever did before, for he would have to attend to his own business and to their business also.

The code of signals I had agreed upon with those who surrounded the hustings was, that when I held my handkerchief in my right hand they were to cheer; when I held it in my left they were to hiss or groan; when I put it in my pocket they were to keep silence. At this part of Mr. Mellam's speech I pulled it out and held it in my right hand for about a minute, during which time there arose and continued one of those noisy storms which newspaper reporters designate between parentheses as "tremendous cheering."

The day before the nomination I had strongly advised Mr. Mellam to go in for the Cottagers' Almshouse question early in his speech, so that he might make sure of pleasing many of his hearers at once, because what he said would be in accordance with their own views. Acting upon this hint, he spoke first of the local welfare of the town, and said that if the electors of Northenville honoured him by returning him to parliament, he would do his utmost to bring in a bill by which the surplus funds of the almshouses might be applied to beautifying the town, and that thus the drainage of the borough could be improved, a new town hall built, the corn exchange enlarged, and the market finished off, without increasing the local rates by a single shilling. Of course sentiments like these—the signal being made by me as before —drew forth loud symptoms of approval from the free and independent electors around the hustings. It was our great card to play was this of the cottagers' almshouses, and in an election speech it is always the best policy to lead trumps.

From local topics Mr. Mellam went on to speak of general politics. Of future evils, of evils which the present ministry had the audacity to propose, he could hardly speak with patience. They intended, if allowed to remain in office, to destroy all, or nearly all, that was dear to us, and whilst trying to amuse the people of this great land with horse-races and the like (as proposed by the gentleman who had seconded the candidate on the other side), to lead them away from the serious consideration of their own affairs, and do away with that anxious careful system of self-government which had always been, and, he trusted, would always be, the glory, the boast, and the pride of Englishmen. (Here—at a signal from me—the cheering was tremendous.) "What the party now in office want," continued Mr. Mellam, "is to centralise every institution, and to have under government superintendence every national establishment. They have succeeded with our telegraph system, they want now to get hold of our poorhouses, and dictate to our poor-law guardians what they shall and what they shall not do. Will Englishmen ever stand this?" ("No, no," from the mob.) "They would shut up your public-houses if they had a chance, and

they will, too, if you allow them." ("We never will.") "In a word, they desire to take from us all we love best, to remove the old landmarks of those things which were so dear to us."

On the whole, Mr. Mellam's speech, delivered in a very earnest business-like way, was a decided success, and was closed with several rounds of applause from the small regiment of electors who obeyed my signals. When he had finished Captain Streatham came forward.

The handkerchief in my left hand brought forth a storm of hisses, groans, chaff, and slang. Captain Streatham took it all very good naturedly, his own supporters—that is, the mass of them—being too far off, or too rudely hustled by our people, to afford him any help. I was too good a general to allow the signs of disapprobation to continue very long, and the moment I put up my handkerchief my followers were silent. The captain was evidently, in the strictest sense of the word, unaccustomed to public speaking. He addressed his hearers in a jaunty, off-hand style, which did not please them, although his good temper and evident determination not to be annoyed with his audience, certainly told in his favour. The difficult point for him to get over was the cottagers' almshouse question. The moment he approached it, out came my pocket-handkerchief in my left hand, and the groans, hisses, catcalls, and slang were renewed. Now and again I would give him the chance of saying a few words; but as these were invariably distasteful to the great mass of his hearers, I invariably caused the marks of disapprobation to be renewed. When the day was over even the reporter of the Independent was obliged to admit that very little of Captain Streatham's address could be heard except by those on the hustings.

When the speeches were over, the mayor came forward and called for a show of hands in favour of each candidate. These were, by a majority of nearly ten to one, in favour of Mr. Mellam. And as the whole of the mob surrounding the hustings were more or less in our pay, or at any rate had drunk our beer, it would have been a miracle had there been any other result. Of course Captain Streatham's party demanded a poll, which was fixed by the mayor for the following Friday. This gave both sides two clear days to prepare for the struggle.

The qualified electors of Northenville, when, as they say of a ship's crew, "all told," amounted to eighteen hundred and forty-seven. Of these I calculated that we might safely set down ten per cent. as abroad, or men who did not care to vote; this reduced them in round numbers to about sixteen hundred. From the pledges I had received, and the assurances that had been made me, I calculated that our side might safely reckon upon seven hundred and fifty votes, and that our adversaries had perhaps as many, leaving a hundred votes or so to be bid for, or got over by some means, and so I determined to make the best use of my time, and work up my forces so as to make the most of our party's strength.

The whole body of electors were divided in my book into three lists—friends, enemies, and doubtful. It was the latter, which I calculated as amounting to about a hundred, that I determined Mr. Mellam should canvass with me on the Wednesday and Thursday. Most of them were shopkeepers, and I found out, very much to my disgust, that Lady Vance had already been amongst them, and that several whom I hoped to carry with us to the poll were pledged to the other party. Still we gained some votes, at a cost, taking one with another, of ten pounds a head. In many cases we called at a house, and perhaps bought a canary, or a parrot, or a dog, for, say, five pounds, leaving our purchase with the seller until we should send for it: which meant, of course, that it would remain with its former owner for ever. Many persons who are not behind the scenes in election matters, believe that bribery is a thing of history; but those who manage these affairs know better. Of course Mr. Mellam never saw or heard of any bribery going on. All he did was to provide me with money for "sundry" expenses. If I paid five pounds for a bulfinch that cost as many pence, or gave ten pounds for a terrier that would have been dear at five shillings, he knew nothing of it—at least, not officially. I was the person who bought everything, and who made presents to those from whom I could not purchase. Sometimes—and this is a very politic stroke in electioneering—the present is made through a child. The party that is canvassing goes into a house, and finds that the wife only is at home. You ask how the husband is going to vote, and are told that he has not yet made up his mind. There is a child; you admire it, ask its age, wonder that it is so large for its years, say that you have one of your own, just that age, but not half so large. The woman's heart is gained, and you may depend that her husband's vote is half won. You ask why the child is not better dressed; the woman says she can't afford to give it better clothes. You inquire whether a five-pound note would not fit out her child, and herself, with Sunday clothes. She says it would, and do more besides. You give her the money, praise her child again, talk of indifferent matters, and take your leave, saying you hope her husband will vote for your candidate. Depend upon it that vote is yours, and that when you inspect the voting list the name of that woman's husband will be found recorded on your side.

Another way of getting votes is through the local loan societies. Find out the names of electors who are in debt to any of these institutions, and the amount they owe. Pay off the debts of these debtors, and depend upon it their votes are yours.

Twice during the two days that were left to us I met Lady Vance, who seemed to be very busy visiting amongst some of the electors, or rather their wives. On the Thursday, as I made out by my lists and calculations, our side could rely upon a certain majority of fifty, or

perhaps more. Lady Vance not only looked triumphant, but Tom Spavit had a smirk on his countenance which seemed to say that their chance of victory was reduced to a certainty. All over the town the other party gave out that their side was sure to win, and that their majority would not be less than a hundred. I could not make it out, there were not more than sixteen hundred electors in the town that could vote, and of these I made out, by my calculations, we had secured from eight hundred and forty to eight hundred and sixty. Again and again I went over the lists, but always with the same results; and on the Friday morning the polling commenced.

At noon the numbers stood:

Mellam 420
Streatham . . . 380

leaving us a majority of forty ahead. At one o'clock we had polled another two hundred and twenty, and our adversaries only a hundred and ninety, thus still increasing our majority. At three o'clock we had polled eight hundred and twenty, but the other party had crept up nearer to us, and had polled seven hundred and forty. I thought the battle was won, and was startled to find that at half past three we had only increased our score by ten, whereas the enemy had gained some sixty votes, and was now only twenty-three or twenty-four behind us. Our agents were busy whipping up voters in every direction, but about a quarter to four sixty odd electors arrived by the London train, and going direct to the poll voted for Streatham. At four o'clock, when the poll closed, the numbers were:

Streatham . . . 886
Mellam 834

Majority for the enemy fifty-two, and so the battle was lost. I found out later that Lady Vance's agents had all along made sure of a number of Northenville electors who lived in London, and had kept them in reserve until the very last moment. They had left London at 6 A.M. that day, but the train had been greatly delayed on the way. Had they been detained another quarter of an hour we should have gained the day. As it turned out Captain Streatham got his seat, and will in due time go out as Governor to a West Indian colony, where I hope he may do well. Mr. Mellam intends to try his luck again, with me for helper, at the approaching general election.

THE AGE OF STONE.

A BOOK has been recently published on the other side of the Channel, entitled La Chute du Ciel, The Fall of the Sky, of which we say no more than that, written by a noble author, its object is to prove, in some six hundred pages, that coal, erratic boulders, fossil remains in general, and a variety of sundries, among them being the flint implements found in "the drift," have all—all, been shot out on the earth from the firmament above! They are worn-out rubbish cast off by the moon or whichever of the planets you please.

This theory does not disturb our equanimity; because when a new science, "Prehistoric Archæology," fills leaders in the Times, and occupies a prominent place in addresses of Presidents of the British Association, we may without anxiety leave the said things found in the drift to receive eventually a correct account of their use and origin.

In truth, the light of science, like the light of day, breaks gradually on the human understanding. At first, nothing is visible but objects close at hand. Soon, however, the distance widens, unsuspected points come, one by one, into view; at last, the delighted eye takes in the complete circuit of an extensive horizon.

As with terrestrial space, so it is with earthly time. Within the memory of man, history, geology, creation even, were supposed to lie within the limits of a few thousand years. Astronomy (through the means of the precession of the equinoxes), first raised doubts as to the accuracy of such narrow bounds. Geology stretched out the lapse of past time over an indefinitely wide extent; and finally, a French gentleman, M. Boucher de Perthes, recently deceased in the fulness of years, by obstinately searching gravel pits in the valley of the Somme, assigned to the human race a longevity which, until quite lately, it was black heresy even to imagine.

The world had long been puzzled by the inscrutable antiquity of Celtic remains and so-called Druidical erections; now, Dr. Hooker tells us that there exist in India, within three hundred miles of the British capital, indigenous tribes who are still in the habit of raising megalithic monuments. It seems that there are countries in the East in which tombs, altars, and places of worship, are still built after the fashion of Stonehenge. There may even be tribes still using exactly such knives and arrowheads as are found in the drift; Dr. Hooker, with his eyes fixed on the Khasia people of East Bengal, proposes to besiege the problem from this singularly practical point of attack. All this is quite new light thrown on a subject wrapped in gloom. Before the Iron Age, the Silver Age, and the Golden Age, was an Age of Stone. Man knew not metals, but he fabricated and made use of flint. If fossil man were still a desideratum (which is now denied), his fossil handiworks are to be found in plenty. No animal (except man) of which we have the slightest trace or relic, is capable of fashioning knives, axes, spearheads, arrow-heads, symbols, toys, personal ornaments, and tools. If such be found in a truly fossil state, the unavoidable inference is that man must have been the living companion of numerous extinct animals. He must have shared the forest with the mammoth, have chased the gigantic Irish deer, have feasted on the flesh of the aurochs, and trembled at the voice of the monstrous tiger of our caverns. What a life to lead! An intruder

among, not the master of, a numberless crowd of powerful brutes!

With his feeble means of defence and offence, with gaunt carnivores glaring at him by night and by day, with colossal bears, hyenas, and felidæ multiplying around, without any possible check *from him*, man was the victim and the prey. Even beasts of comparatively milder natures would unconsciously and unintentionally be his enemies, not his friends—his servants least of all. Little would he be able to withstand the shock of angry bulls and encroaching elephants. Attempts at culture would soon be trodden under foot. A persecuted fugitive, man would owe his only safety to cunning and flight. For security, he would have to retreat to the depths of the semi-liquid swamp, or climb to a lodging on the steepest rocks. And what a race of men! As the polished European is to the Red Indian, so would the Red Indian be to that poor, primitive savage.

The relics of this bygone race appear, at first sight, exceedingly trifling. They are nearly limited to bones, and rudely cut stones. We find no inscriptions, medals, nor statues. Our pains are rewarded by no vases, elegant in outline or rich in material. We gather nothing but bones, potsherds, and scarcely polished bits of flint. But for the observer in whose eyes the demonstration of a truth is of greater price than the possession of a gem, value consists neither in finished workmanship nor in money's worth. In his eyes, the most beautiful object is that which most helps him to a sure conclusion. The pebble which a collector would disdainfully reject, or the bone which has not even the value of a bone, becomes so precious on account of its logical importance that it would not be exchanged for its weight in gold. It is the unquestionable footmark of man, walking on earth thousands and thousands of years ago.

These venerable though humble relics—arms, utensils, idols, symbols—not only betray the existence of a people, their habits of life, their means of satisfying the necessities of the moment; they also give us a significant clue to the thoughts and the conscience of our antediluvian ancestors. They prove that they had a notion of the future, a faith, religious longings—in short, that they had caught a glimpse of the Divinity. The first men who united their efforts to raise a monumental stone, who hewed it into shape, or battered it into the coarse resemblance of some living object, came forth, by that very act, from association with mere brute animals, and ceased to grovel utterly in the dust.

M. Boucher de Perthes is fairly entitled to the credit of having founded Prehistoric Archæology. At first, the few who listened to him only laughed. No scientific body would accept his collections or give house-room to the treasures he had collected together. They remained for years in his house in Abbeville, open to those who chose to inspect them, but quite neglected by the learned world. He survived to see them appreciated, and to be himself regarded as not quite a madman.

The beginning of the matter happened thus. One summer's evening, in 1826, while M. de Perthes was examining a sand pit at the outskirts of the Faubourg St. Gilles, at Abbeville, the idea struck him that manufactured flints might perhaps be found in tertiary beds. Years passed, and he searched numerous localities in vain. At last, at a place called the "Banc de l'Hôpital," he found a flint, about five inches long, from which two splints had evidently been struck off. Every one to whom it was shown, said this was the result of accident. He found a second, and then a third, exactly similar. M. de Perthes felt convinced that he had traced the hand of man, and he continued his search. But learned dons of science refused to believe that he had found human handiwork mixed up with virgin diluvium.

But, argued our enthusiast, archæology, like geology, is as yet no more than an infant science. It is only by penetrating into the depths of the earth that you will arrive at really great discoveries. We have not yet pierced the epidermis. We have merely scratched its upper surface and raised a little dust. How will you demonstrate the antiquity of the population of any given soil? By the antiquity of the objects found in it. How can you measure that antiquity? By the materials, the workmanship, and above all by the subterranean position of the objects. We thereby admit a sort of scale of life—a superposition of strata formed by the relics of generations; and we seek, in each one of those strata, indications of the history of those generations. Consequently, the deepest strata will illustrate the most ancient populations.

It frequently happens, in the valley of the Somme, that after having traversed the stratum of Roman soil, and of the soil of the Gauls, you will reach a Celtic deposit, which you recognise by the nature of its pottery. There you will find an axe of stone, characteristic, in your eyes, of that epoch when iron was still rare. Sounding deeper, you meet with a stratum of turf, of no great thickness, but whose ancient formation, if you examine its elements, appears incontestable. Beneath this stratum is a bed of sand, and in this bed another axe. When you are convinced that this axe is in its natural place, and has not in any way been introduced into the sand, it is evident that the epoch of the fabrication of the second axe is separated from the epoch of the first, by the series of ages requisite for the formation of the bed of turf—an interval of time of which you are able to form an approximate estimate. You conclude that, during this period, the inhabitants have been, if not in the same, at least in an analogous condition; which is confirmed by historical and traditional probability. The primitive Gauls, composed of wandering tribes, and living by fishing and the chase, like hordes of North American savages, long remained

stationary, without making any sensible progress in manufactures or the arts.

Digging still further down, you arrive at a level which you are at first tempted to regard as virgin earth that has never borne the footsteps of man. Still, however, there are human traces. After a little study, you cannot mistake them. A mere notch in a bone, made with the edge of a flint; a splinter knocked off the flint, with the evidence of intention; a single bit of wood, cut and not broken, prove the presence of a human hand as clearly as a carved inscription. The most intelligent animal —the elephant, the dog, or the ape—is incapable of making that notch. He breaks or gnaws the wood; he can neither cut nor slice it.

The accuracy of this reasoning was tested by the visits of English geologists, who dared to burst through the cautious scepticism adopted by their brethren of France. Mr. Prestwich says: "I myself detached a flint partly fashioned into an axe, buried in the gravel at a depth of more than five yards. A labourer who was working in a trench, disinterred without observing them a couple of axes, which we picked up from the thrown-out gravel." Sir Charles Lyell says: "The strata containing these rude instruments reposed immediately upon the chalk, and belong to the period which followed the formation of the pleiocene beds—that is, to the quaternary period. The antiquity of the Amiens and Abbeville flint instruments is very great, when compared with the time embraced by history and even by tradition. The disappearance of the elephant, the rhinoceros, and other genera of quadrupeds now strangers to Europe, in all probability implies that a wide lapse of time separates the epoch when these fossil instruments were fashioned from that when the Romans invaded Gaul."

In the work* in which M. de Perthes first announced these facts, he gives figures both of the instruments and of the images or symbols. There are rough tools whose utility is evident, either for hollowing out or boring, even were they not fashioned by hand. There are knives of the same description, formed of oblong flints with a naturally rounded base, which has been allowed to remain in its original state in order to give greater strength to the handle. The symbols and images of stone found in Celtic tombs, are ordinarily those of the animals whose bones are found in the same deposits. A like fact occurs in the diluvian beds; but the cause is different. In the case of the Celtic remains, the juxtaposition was effected by the hand of man; in the diluvian beds, by the agency of the waters.

The remarkable analogy between the figures of the Celtic tombs and the animals which lived at that period, is not less striking in those obtained from the diluvian beds. The reason is simple. The antediluvian peoples, like the Celtic people and like people at the present day, could only reproduce copies of species they had seen; and they copied those which they beheld the most frequently. Among those species, some were common to both the Celtic and the diluvian periods—bears, stags, boars, and oxen. But besides these, the diluvian beds offer many figures which are never found in Celtic deposits—notably of elephants and rhinoceroses. There are also images of problematical creatures whose types are now unknown to us. Nevertheless, the abundance of their copies in stone is a proof that such creatures did once exist.

Many dogs' heads surprise by the freshness of their chiselling; there is also a hippopotamus's head. A bear sitting on his hind quarters is almost humorously represented. Symbols are frequently found which appear to represent the enormous mastodons and antediluvian elephants whose bones we discover mixed up pell-mell with their portraits in flint. At the period of the great inundation which formed those deposits, these animals were very common in Europe, as is proved by the abundance of their remains.

* Antiquités Celtiques et Antédiluviennes. 2 vols.

A PORTRAIT, FROM MEMORY.

A Persian princess, tall and fair,
With lustrous lengths of amber hair;
A lovely, tender, small child's face,
A floating step, a queenly grace;
A lily robe all striped and barred
With lines of gold, and diapered
With black, as once Venetian dames
Wore, and yet wear within the frames
Of Bonifazio, Tintoret,
And glorious Titian (jewels set
On palace walls within that shrine
Vowed to Thalasse the Divine,
Which men call Venice); and a smile
So innocent yet arch the while,
A child might smile thus; two grey eyes
With liquid subtle flatteries
For all they look on; frank, serene,
Pure from all grief or care or sin;
For grief will dim, sin leaves a stain
Which brightest eyes must still retain;
But hers are cloudless, clear, and bright,
Like angel eyes, all love, all light.

A rosy fan hung from her wrist
(A white flower by a houri kissed);
And round her fair throat's graceful curve
Were coral beads, whose hue might serve
To match the full lips, ripe and sweet;
So noble, perfect, and complete
Her beauty: yet she wears it calm
As queens their crown, as saints their palm.

Such was the vision once I saw,
Peerless, without a fleck or flaw,
Mid blossoms faint, and trembling trees
All fluttering in the soft south breeze.
The passionate air breathed forth desire,
Adoring Nature glowed with fire,

And Love weighed down the drooping flowers
And murmured through the birdful bowers;
Its pulse was felt as sunbeams came
And scorched the garden as with flame,
And Love thrilled each young worshipper
Who there vowed life and soul to her.

Hers was the bounty but to be,
That which all hearts rejoiced to see—
The largesse hers, but ours the boon.
As when o'er earth the fair proud moon
Shines with her soft resplendent face,
A benediction and a grace
Enrich our lives; the liberal skies
Thus gladden with bright stars our eyes;
Thus choicest gifts are granted free;
Thus beauty is God's charity.

THE PASSION-PLAY AT BRIXLEGG.

On a wet Sunday morning, in the month of August, in the present year, we found ourselves in a special train, going from Innsbruck to the obscure little Tyrolese village of Brixlegg. The train carried a very considerable number of passengers, chiefly of the peasant class, and—with about half a dozen exceptions—all natives of the country.

A special train to Brixlegg! The announcement would vastly have astonished any traveller by one of the great through trains traversing Innsbruck, who might have chanced to inquire whither all those bearers of glistening red, blue, brown, or green, umbrellas were bound. Nevertheless, the special train was going to Brixlegg, and it arrived there duly at its appointed hour. The railway station lies about twenty minutes' walk distant from the village. The road from the former to the latter was already ankle-deep in mud in many places, and was becoming rapidly worse under the tread of many heavily-shod feet, and the influence of a soft, fine, unintermitting rain, which had been falling since dawn, and which continued to fall with small prospect of cessation.

We trudged along in company with a large number of peasants, who continued to arrive from all directions. In addition to those brought by the railway from Innsbruck, very many came on foot, and more still in rustic vehicles of various kinds: from the leather-hooded einspänner of the well-to-do farmer, down to the long narrow country carts, carrying heavy loads of men, women, and children of the humblest agricultural class, seated on trusses of hay.

The village of Brixlegg is very beautifully situated. Indeed it would be difficult to find a spot which should be otherwise than beautiful throughout the length and breadth of the fair green land of Tyrol. But not of its swelling hills, its distant snow-flecked crags, or its rich smiling meadows, were we thinking as we went along through the mire past the picturesque cottages of Brixlegg's main street. In common with the rest of the crowd we pressed on eagerly towards our destination, which soon appeared in sight at a turn of the road. It was a large wooden building, like a colossal barn. It stood on an irregular open space at one extremity of the village. This open space was, no doubt, in its normal condition a pretty turf-covered common, green with that emerald vividness of hue which gives a peculiar charm to the aspect of every Tyrolese valley. On this Sunday morning, however, it had become a morass, a Slough of Despond, through which we floundered towards one of the numerous doors that gave access to the wooden building aforesaid. Arrived at the entrance, we paid the price of admission—two florins for the best places—and having climbed a rough wooden stair, found ourselves in a little side balcony which afforded a view of the whole interior of the building.

The erection was entirely of wood, as has been said. One glance sufficed to show the spectator its nature and object. We were in a theatre—a theatre rough in material, and somewhat unconventional in form, but spacious, airy, and admirably adapted for seeing and hearing without difficulty or discomfort. There was neither gallery nor "dress circle." The great mass of the spectators were seated on wooden benches on the floor of the theatre, which floor sloped upward towards the back at an angle sufficient to enable the persons on the hindmost benches to command as full a view of the stage as those in front. The stage was hidden, for the present, by a painted canvas drop-scene, which hung in a large proscenium rather wide for its height. In front of it was an orchestra, filled with players; and between them and the foremost row of spectators were seated some dozen singers, male and female, holding their music in their hands.

The dimensions of the audience part of the theatre were as follows: fifty-six feet broad, thirty-six feet high, and one hundred and four feet long. The whole of the available space was filled by a closely-packed assemblage of persons exclusively of the peasant class. Row after row of weather-beaten rustic faces, surmounted —men's and women's alike—by the tall pointed Tyrolese hat, stretched back to the wall of the building. The narrow space at each side left for ingress and egress to and from the seats was also crowded with spectators, who stood patiently throughout the whole performance. Truly a lengthy performance! What would any sophisticated metropolitan population in Europe say to a play which should commence at nine o'clock A.M. and end at five in the afternoon, allowing little more than one hour in the middle for repose and refreshment?

And now, while the musicians in the orchestra are playing a preliminary symphony in a melancholy minor strain, let us take the opportunity afforded us to inform the reader what manner of spectacle it is that we are about to witness, and to enter into sundry explanatory details gathered from a little neatly-

printed pamphlet sold (by authority) in large numbers in the theatre. And let us, too, before entering into those details, premise that, however at variance much of the forthcoming representation may be with English and Protestant conceptions of what is fitting, decorous, or edifying, no trace of levity or irreverence was to be found among either the performers or spectators of the very extraordinary exhibition. Here follows the literal translation of the first page of the programme of the drama:

THE GREAT
EXPIATORY SACRIFICE UPON GOLGOTHA;
OR,
THE HISTORY OF THE PASSION AND DEATH OF JESUS AFTER THE FOUR EVANGELISTS;
WITH
Pictorial Representations from the Old Testament, Music and Singing,
FOR
Contemplation and Edification.

Surely a singular product of the printing-press in this nineteenth century!

The peasants of Tyrol have for centuries been famous for their skill and delight in a class of dramatic representations which they call "Bauern-Comödien"—literally, Peasant-Comedies. These are chiefly—to the best of my knowledge, exclusively—founded upon religious subjects, such as the life and miracles of some saints, or a well-known legend of Holy Church. In these remote valleys there still lingers a remnant of the Mystery, or Miracle Play of the Middle Ages; nor need the reader be informed that the Bauern-Comödien are by no means the only remnants to be found in Tyrol of centuries so long vanished from our ken that it is almost difficult for us to conceive of those who breathed and moved in them as fellow-creatures, holding the bond of a common humanity with ourselves. Old-world thoughts, beliefs, and feelings, still exist behind the shelter of the crags and peaks of Tyrol, and have taken refuge in its secluded dales, in a manner strictly analogous to the gradual retreat of decaying races of men or animals before the busy world's encroaching advances.

The Bauern-Comödien are written, arranged, acted, and witnessed, entirely by peasants. Their performance is not unfrequent at certain festive seasons, and the rude open-air theatre used for their exhibition is easily and cheaply prepared in a country where timber is abundant. But the production of a Passions-Spiel (Passion-Play) such as we were about to witness at Brixlegg is a very different and much more important matter. Treating of a far higher and more solemn argument than the Bauern-Comödien, great care and circumspection are exercised in granting permission for the playing of a Passions-Spiel: such care and circumspection being exercised chiefly for the avoidance of any possible "scandal" to religion in the performance. "Scandal" is a great evil in the eyes of Mother Church, and she is ever watchful to prevent it, where prevention is possible. All the difficulties which had to be surmounted before the Passion-Play at Brixlegg could be announced for public representation are enumerated with much gravity in the little pamphlet we have spoken of. The recital of these difficulties, however, albeit interesting enough no doubt to the Brixleggers, would scarcely be so in the eyes of English readers. We will therefore rest contented with saying that all obstacles were surmounted by the end of March, 1868, and that in the last weeks of May the following announcement, printed on large yellow bills, was to be met with everywhere throughout northern Tyrol, from the busiest market-town to the remotest most secluded hamlet:

"By highest permission of the imperial royal governmental department in Innsbruck, and with most gracious leave of the Prince Bishop of Salzburg, there will be represented in Brixlegg, near the railway-station, in the lower valley of the Inn, in Tyrol, the Great Expiatory Sacrifice upon Golgotha." [Here followed the title of the Passion-Play, already quoted. The announce-bill then stated the days on which the performances were to take place—the twelve Sundays, namely, from the seventh of June to the sixth of September inclusive. It gave the prices of admission, which ranged from thirty kreutzers to two florins (children under ten years of age half price), and concluded thus]: "This grand and sublime piece, in the performance of which about three hundred persons from Brixlegg, Kramsach, and the surrounding villages, will participate, begins at nine o'clock in the morning. The hour from mid-day until one o'clock in the afternoon is set apart for the necessary refreshment of the honoured public. The conclusion at about five in the evening. The commencement of each part will be announced by music and a discharge of guns. A right numerous attendance is most politely and respectfully invited by the company."

The drama was divided into sixteen representations. We translate the word literally, but the nearest English equivalent would probably be "acts," of which six make up the first and shortest part of the performance; leaving ten for the second part.

These "representations" consist invariably of three divisions. Firstly, the argument set forth in long-winded, rather jingling rhymes, and spoken by one or other of a troop of angels who fill the place of the chorus in a Greek tragedy. Secondly, a typical picture, a tableau vivant taken from the Old Testament, and shadowing forth with more or less suitability of allegory, the corresponding events in the life of our Lord. Thirdly, the action. This latter is simply the story of the persecution, passion, and crucifixion of Jesus Christ, taken literally from the New Testament, with only such interpolations and additions as serve to string together the incidents in a dramatic form. Where it is necessary to the prosecution and coherence of any scene, a few plain

words of simple dialogue are put into the mouths of the chief personages, by the compiler of the drama. Otherwise they speak the language of the Evangelists. It is to be observed, however, that in no single instance is any word spoken by Jesus, save those to be found in Scripture. He speaks invariably in the texts with which we are all familiar, and utters no syllable else. In a spectacle of which the naïve and audacious realism is astounding, this fact is significant and worth recording.

But now the wailing music dies away. A hush of expectancy falls on the audience. Every face is addressed towards the proscenium. On to the stage in front of the curtain, step forth some five-and-twenty girls who represent angels. They are dressed in white robes reaching to the ankle, and trimmed with gold tinsel; and wear a drapery of blue or crimson cloth also glittering with gold. They have each a golden fillet round the head, and wear red or blue morocco boots according to the colour of their draperies. They are carefully graduated in size; the tallest—a stout country lass of apparently about seventeen years old—standing in the centre to form the apex, whilst the others range themselves in line across the proscenium facing the audience, diminishing regularly on either hand, down to the height of a child of nine or ten years, who finishes the line at each extremity. The centre angel announces the argument of the forthcoming "representation," and, her speech being at an end, the chorus of angels divides, half going to the right and half to the left, so as to leave the centre of the scene open to the view of the spectators. A bell tingles, and the heavy rudely painted canvas curtain rises and discloses the first picture. It is a complex one, containing three distinct subjects. On the right, are Adam and Eve eating the fatal fruit beneath the forbidden tree. On the left, is Abraham with uplifted hand about to slay Isaac, who lies bound upon a pile of fagots before him. In the centre, is a tall cross draped with black gauze, which angels surround in contemplation. For a short time the pictures remain motionless. The angelic chorus on either hand point with outstretched forefinger to the scene. The stage is surprisingly spacious; more so than in many theatres of European fame; and very large numbers are able to move and group upon it without confusion or crowding. Suddenly, at a signal given by the soft sounding of a small bell, the tableau changes. A cherubim with flaming sword drives forth our first parents, who cower abashed from his presence. A heavenly messenger appears to stay the hand of Abraham, who releases his son and fondly embraces him. Lastly, the sombre drapery drops away from the cross, and the surrounding angels fall on their knees and worship. On this, the chorus disappear and the curtain falls. It rises again almost immediately and shows a scene which displays the whole depth and breadth of the stage. It represents a street in Jerusalem. The painting is of the coarsest, but it suffices to convey the meaning of the scene. The stage at first is empty, but loud cries and shouts of joy are heard drawing nearer and nearer. Presently there emerges a little knot of children clad in bright-hued Oriental robes, and bearing long green branches in their hands. They are followed by men and women, old and young, and by a group of poorly dressed men whom we recognise as being copied from the conventional types of the old painters. Peter, with bald head and reverend grey beard; John, with long womanish curls; Judas, with red hair and beard, and yellow garments. More populace all shouting "Hosanna to the Son of David! Hail to him who cometh in the name of the Lord!" And then——; the sensation is indescribable with which we beheld the entrance of that meek figure seated on an ass, before whom the people cast down their garments and strewed branches in the way! No abstract conviction respecting the undesirability of the spectacle, no theoretical objection to the teaching and spirit of which such a spectacle was the outcome, could avail to lessen the profound and almost painfully intense impression of that moment. None the less—perhaps even the more—does our objection remain in force. But the Passion-Play at Brixlegg was intended to appeal solely to the emotional part of human nature, and certainly did not appeal in vain.

Jesus was represented as a sad, pale, gentle, man, with flowing hair and beard, clad in a long plain robe of a rich blue colour; he had bare feet bound with sandals, and trod with a certain simple dignity, very marvellous and noteworthy, remembering that the representative was a mere ignorant uncultured peasant. A man who laboured hard with plough or spade for his daily bread, and who had required much careful instruction before his tongue was able to modify its habitual dialect so as to speak the words of his part in fairly well-pronounced German.

After the entry into Jerusalem, came the driving of the money-changers from the Temple, and the answer respecting the tribute-money, "Render unto Cæsar, the things which are Cæsar's." Jesus with his disciples then left the Temple, and the chief priests and pharisees took counsel together how they might destroy him. The representation ended with a fierce cry of "Vengeance, vengeance! We will have bloody vengeance!" In this the discomfited money-changers, who had been driven from the Temple, joined eagerly. And on this the curtain fell.

Of a performance which lasted so long, and which contained sixteen of such "representations" each consisting of rhyming prologue, dumb tableau, and dramatic action, it would, of course, be impossible to give a detailed account in the space at our command. But we will select a few striking points for description.

First in numerical order comes the angel chorus. These angels are not very interesting personages, it must be owned. They stand square-

fronting, rigid, painfully conscientious in the matter of keeping their blue or red-booted feet at the same angle, heel to heel. They speak in a high pitched strained voice, and raise their arms stiffly at certain rhetorical points in the jingling measure. They have been laboriously and assiduously drilled in every turn of the hand, every glance of the eye, every inflection of the voice. The sole good resulting, is, that they are one and all distinct and audible in their speech. Nay, perhaps, that may not be the sole good resulting; seeing that they are peasant children, ignorant, awkward, uncouth, in their every-day demeanour, one other excellent result of the pains bestowed upon them has been to suppress a great deal in voice, manner, and gesture, which would otherwise have proved offensive or ludicrous. Even as it is, it is curious to observe how the natural inequalities of intelligence among these girls reveal themselves unmistakeably. One little maid, the last of the line, and consequently one of the smallest children there, recites her verse when it comes to her turn, with a fervour and feeling that break through the parrot stiffness and uniformity. True, she raises her eyes, and stretches her arms, and clasps her little hands precisely as her instructor has bidden her to do. But the difference between this little one and her companions is, that whilst with them every gesture appears to be caused from without, as though an invisible wire pulled them hither and thither, her limbs are manifestly moved by some spirit within.

Next in order come the tableaux vivants. Of these it may be said that the grouping is almost always picturesque and good, and that the costumes are very fairly accurate—with one very notable exception; a king Ahasuerus, whose Turkish trousers and preposterous turban are not to be contemplated with gravity. The performers, if not especially graceful, are commendably still and firm in their attitudes. Among the best pictures, were the sale of Joseph by his brethren (a really pretty pastoral picture, simple and effective); Manna descending for the Israelites in the wilderness; and the boy Isaac laden with wood for the burnt-offering, ascending the mountain. The scene of the rain of manna was a very varied and well imagined picture. There must have been, at least, two hundred persons on the stage; and to group these in an effective manner so as to avoid both confusion and monotony would have been no easy task for the professional director of a great theatre. Not to mention that the materials in the hand of the latter would be practised performers, well used to the business of the scene, and not peasants, artizans, and agricultural labourers.

In the acted drama, the shortcomings of the actors, their ignorance, their awkwardness, and their inexperience, were naturally most glaring and noticeable. But it was also in this portion of the performance that they gave proof of a great amount of feeling, imitative faculty, and good taste arising from singleminded earnestness devoid of self-conscious mauvaise honte. One of us had witnessed a religious play many years ago, in Britany. But there it was defiled by detestable bucolic buffoonery and ribaldry. Here among these peasants of North Tyrol all was grave, simple, serious. The performance was marked by a startling and audacious realism; but a realism wholly devoid of irreverence. The washing of the disciples' feet by Jesus, the anointing of the Lord's head by Mary Magdalene, the crowing of the cock after St. Peter had denied his Master; all were rendered with matter-of-fact accuracy. To witness these things pourtrayed by persons without a profound faith in them—persons who did not literally believe in the truth of every detail—would have been intolerable. As it was, although many parts of the Passion-Play were intensely painful, it was impossible to feel either disgust or contempt. Disapproval we might and did feel. But the truth is, that the whole spectacle was invested with the moral dignity of sincerity. In the little pamphlet already alluded to, mention is made of the short, the very short, time at disposal for the preparation of so great an undertaking. From the end of March to the beginning of June. Two short months in which to prepare a drama that was to last through nearly the whole day, to employ three hundred performers, to contain upwards of twenty complex groups, and sixteen acts, to be accompanied by music and singing, and to be presented in appropriate costume, and with scenery and machinery! Add to this that the actors being all hard-working people could only assemble for instruction and rehearsal, on Sundays and holidays, and that in the first week of April no trace of the spacious solid wooden theatre had as yet appeared on the village green of Brixlegg.

The writer of the pamphlet, whose childlike naïveté, and unaffected admiration for the great achievements have an old world freshness and simplicity that remind one of the tone of some of Shakespeare's characters, concludes thus solemnly: "Good will, and love, and the trust that honour would be done to the dear God, these were the mighty levers which heaved aside a mountain of difficulties, and brought the incredible to pass, truly to the honour of God and the wondering joy of men!" The actors looked forward with trembling anxiety to the day of the first performance. And although they had given proof of the most conscientious study, the most unwearying labour, and the purest zeal, yet they relied only upon the assistance of God. "He will help us," they would exclaim readily and often. "He will help us. Otherwise all were in vain."

It was in this spirit that the Brixlegg Passion-Play was conducted from first to last. The director, a priest named Winkler (to give him his due style and title, the Reverend Cooperator Winkler of Brixlegg) must have gone through enormous labour in the drilling of his inexperienced flock. From time to time we, sitting in our balcony, caught a glimpse of the

reverend gentleman standing at the "wing," book in hand, or moving about behind the scenes; active, earnest, evidently the life and soul of the whole.

In the concluding scenes of the drama no detail was spared. The insulting gibes, the brutal buffets, the crown of thorns, the cruel blood-drinking lash, all were represented. One of the most powerfully affecting scenes, without being horrible, was the parting of the Virgin Mary from her Son. Another pathetic point was when the Lord, sinking under the cross on his way to Calvary, was met by women of Jerusalem, with their little children, who knelt and wept compassionately; and when he told them not to weep for him but for themselves and their little ones, and uttered the heart-rending apostrophe, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."

The last supper was a strikingly successful embodiment of the great picture by Leonardo da Vinci. The crucifixion on Golgotha, was an extraordinary and harrowing spectacle. Consider it! At this date of the world's history, and after the flow of eighteen hundred years, that tragedy of tragedies is acted in mimic show, upon a public stage, by men whose forefathers in Herod's time were skin-clad savages, dimly afraid of distant mighty Rome, as a fierce wild brute dimly fears the human mind that wields the conquering whip! Now Rome, that distant Rome, sends no more glittering cohorts into Northern wilds. The times are changed. Instead of mailed centurion, stark and stern, there keeps watch a mild old gentleman in sombre simple garb, holding a book, and teaching little children — and yet ruling rugged men with a more absolute and searching tyranny than any ever used by laurelled Cæsar! A wailing mournful chorus preceded the scene of death. The band of angels appeared with black draperies, and the speaker solemnly conjured the spectators to remember that for them and for their sins this agony had fallen on the Sinless One. The curtain rose amid breathless silence, broken only by the horrible clink of hammers. The two thieves already appeared hanging aloft, each on his fatal tree. In the centre, men were busied about a prostrate form. Always sounded that horrible clink of hammers. A group of women shrouded their weeping faces, shuddering. Roman soldiers, lance in hand, kept back the many-coloured crowd. In the foreground stood the Jewish Priest, exultant and unrelenting. Slowly and noiselessly, men upreared the central cross until it stood erect, bearing a figure which appeared like some colossal mediæval carving on a crucifix; so still was it, so wan, so ivory-pale, with its black crown of thorns and strip of snowy drapery, and the cruel crimson wounds in its hands and feet. Precisely as the Evangelists have related it, the awful scene was presented, point for point, before our eyes. No particular was omitted. Throughout the whole drama, we discovered only one variation from the narrative of the New Testament. This was the incident of St. Veronica, attired as a noble Roman lady, meeting Jesus on his way to Calvary and wiping his brow with her handkerchief, which forthwith received the impression of the Divine face. This favourite legend of the Romish Church was received with manifest satisfaction. But it was the only instance in which any mere tradition of the church was introduced. The descent from the Cross was one of the most extraordinary pieces of mimic show imaginable. The death in every line and muscle of the drooping form, the pathetic helplessness with which the body hung in the white cloth they wrapped around it to lower it to the ground, the placid stillness of the colourless face lying thorn-crowned across the knees of Mary Mother who received her son at the foot of the cross, all were absolutely perfect. No artist ever conceived or painted a dead Christ with more absolute accuracy of physical detail, or a more noble melancholy sweetness of spiritual expression, than we saw presented bodily before our eyes in the Passion-Play at Brixlegg. And the man who achieved this representation was a hard-handed tiller of the soil. We saw him afterwards in his every-day garb, and spoke to him. He was changed and made coarser by the absence of the flowing hair and beard he had assumed for the drama; but there were the dreamy soft eyes and the broad pure-looking brow. We asked him if he were not tired. He had gone through a tiring task, even as a mere effort of physical endurance. But there had been more in the performance than that. There had been evident emotion, chastened and subdued by unfaltering dignity. He answered in few words and in a faint and weary voice. He looked like one who had passed through severe mental suffering. This appearance, however, was, we felt convinced, the natural and unconscious expression of his face at all times.

Of the other characters, the most remarkable was Judas. It is to be noted, moreover, that Judas was the only one of the performers who received any public mark of approbation. He was loudly applauded on several occasions, and greeted with cries of "bravo!" It is not difficult to account for Judas alone being so received. A sense of reverence and decorum would obviously check any such demonstration towards the more sacred personages of the drama. To Judas no devout veneration was due. He was no saint, no apostle; simply a bad traitorous man; greedy and false and violent. The actor pourtrayed these qualities with considerable vividness and skill. *Him*, therefore, as a mere human and earthly personage, we may venture to applaud! Judas's death was a highly startling exhibition. After a paroxysm of raving remorse, he rushed to a tree in the centre of the stage, drew a cord

from his belt, and then and there hanged himself; swinging backward and forward some four or five feet from the ground! All our party were struck by the intense *Jewishness* of Judas. The couleur locale was more marked in him—in his dress, his voice, and what is technically termed his "make up"—than in any of the others.

The female performers were less satisfactory, dramatically speaking. Mary Magdalene was a buxom fair woman with a flood of blonde hair. The Virgin somewhat tame, with an inexpressive face and a painfully whining voice. But she had the rare merit of walking and moving with unembarrassed grace and dignity.

It may not be uninteresting to mention the social condition of some of the chief actors. St. John and the Magdalene were brother and sister, the former a miller at Mühlau; Mary was the daughter of the village shopkeeper at Brixlegg; St. Peter was a labourer in the ironworks at Brixlegg; Pilate, a farmer; Caiaphas, a shoemaker; Herod was a coppersmith; Saint Veronica was a locksmith's wife; St. James, the son of the sacristan at Volders; the centurion, a woodcutter; Joseph of Arimathea, an agricultural labourer.

On the day on which we saw this play, the audience numbered two thousand three hundred persons. This was the tenth performance; and on none of the former occasions had the attendance been smaller.

There were some marvellous studies for the painter and the physiognomist among those rustic faces: faces which had not been ground into uniform pattern by custom and the contact of large masses of their fellows, but belonged to solitary dwellers in cottages perched high on toppling crags; on hidden farms wrapped in some green fold of the great hills; in forest-darkened dwellings where the wind sings wild melodies in winter; and in Alpine huts fringed with blue gentian and forget-me-not, and fragrant with the breath of lowing kine. Faces which bore great nature's stamp and impress unmistakably, but yet in an unconscious way: much as the dumb boulder lying in a meadow reveals the record of the circling years in many a flood of greenest lichen-velvet, brown weather-stain, or startling blood-red moss. These faces were as interesting and as pregnant with food for meditation, as the spectacle presented on the stage. All were attentive, serious, self-possessed. If we were to imply that a full appreciation of the awe and horror and pity of the story were reflected in them, we should mislead the reader. Such full appreciation would demand a higher and wider imaginative faculty than these poor peasants could lay claim to. A profound reverence, an awful wonder, must proceed from power of comparison which they in nowise possess. But no one looking at them could doubt two things; first, that they implicitly believed in the truth of all that their priests had taught them; secondly, that they had hearts accessible to the promptings of human love and fellowship. When Mary parted from her beloved son, yielding him up to meet a dreadful death, the tears streamed copiously down many a rugged face. Nearly all the women—especially the elder women, who had known the joys and sorrows of motherhood—wept bitterly; and so did many men.

Many of the audience shuddered when Jesus fell under the lash. All sat still as statues, during the scene of the crucifixion. When the Roman soldier pierced the Saviour's side, and blood gushed forth and fell plashing on the ground, there ran an electrical thrill of horror through the crowd. Proportioned to the highly-strung intensity of this terrible scene, was the popular sense of relief when the stone fell from the sepulchre, and the rising Lord appeared, radiant, to the astonished Roman soldiers. The audience could then have shouted aloud with joy. They relieved their feelings at the earliest decent opportunity by a hearty peal of laughter at the Roman soldiers aforesaid, who rushed pell-mell through the streets of Jerusalem, shouting, "He is arisen! He is arisen!" at the full pitch of their country-bred lungs. It was not that the spectators were disrespectful; they were simply very glad; and, moreover, they rejoiced in an absolute physical relief after the strain and immobility of the foregoing scenes.

The performance ends with a tableau of the victorious Saviour standing triumphant, cross in hand, surrounded by saints, and angels, and patriarchs. His snowy drapery is changed for glowing crimson. His crown of thorns is gone. He points upward with the cross, in ecstasy. The victory is achieved, the sacrifice accomplished!

The notes of a rejoicing hallelujah chorus resound through the building. The crowd pours out, and we with the rest, into the damp autumn air, and we front the changeless aspect of the great grand mountains, pondering many things.

PASSENGER POSTAGE.

In the rose-scented city of Bisnagar, Prince Houssian overheard a crier offering a piece of carpet to the multitude. Learning its properties Prince Houssian marvelled, for it was a magic carpet. "By it," said the owner, "you may be instantly transported to whatever place you wish to visit, and will find yourself in the desired spot almost immediately without being stopped by any obstacle whatsoever. You have but to wish and you are there." This *was* Arabian Nights romance, but it may be very nearly sober nineteenth century fact. Progress is but the realization of old dreamers' fancies.

The modern crier is Mr. Raphael Brandon. He is the author of a new scheme of railway organisation, promising results as wonderful as ever the street seller of Bisnagar vaunted of his carpet. It is simply an adaptation of Sir Rowland Hill's Post-office scheme, to railway passenger traffic. He proposes to treat a passenger like a letter, and send him anywhere

over the kingdom, regardless of distance, at a fixed minimum charge. A threepenny stamp shall take you, third-class, any journey in one direction you like to go, whether from Ludgate-hill to Sydenham, or from John o' Groat's to Land's End. If you prefer second-class, you will take a sixpenny stamp; if you will luxuriate in first-class, your postage will amount to one shilling.

This sounds as mad as the penny postage innovation sounded at first. But Mr. Brandon quietly proceeds to argue in his pamphlet* that it would pay everybody, shareholders, the public, and the government, besides giving renewed impetus to industry of all sorts. At the end of 1865, the total amount of capital invested in railway undertakings in the United Kingdom was four hundred and forty-three and a half millions. The average dividend paid on the whole outlay was only four and two-fifths per cent. Hitherto, then, it is clear that railways have not paid well.

Government, he says, must take the railways as it has done the post-office and the telegraphs; that is Mr. Brandon's first requirement. The saving in expenses of management, through doing away with conflicting interests, and expensive directorates, will be a large item, to begin with; and a trifle amounting to a quarter of a million a year, in outlay for legal and parliamentary expenses will be abolished. But these are only flea-bites in a scheme of such magnitude. The great point is, once provide cheap and easy locomotion, and passenger traffic will develop itself to an extent hitherto unprecedented. Already, through cheapening the means of travelling, thousands now travel where scores previously journeyed by coach. Cheap postage increased letter-carrying many hundredfold. People don't travel as they would if railway fares were reduced to an uniform and nominal postage charge. At present, labourers out of employ, mass themselves together in impoverished districts, and fall back on their parish, because the railway fare that would transport them to distant towns where their labour is in demand is to them a prohibitive rate. Cheap locomotion by distributing labour, will decrease pauperism. Every one will travel if only the facility be given. But this facility can only be obtained under government management.

The sum proposed to be charged for passenger postage, looks ridiculously small. In reality it is not so much less than the average fare at present paid for the average journeys as might be supposed. In 1865, in round numbers, three and a half million passenger trains ran over seventy-one million miles, carrying two hundred and fifty-two million passengers. The traffic produced fourteen million seven hundred and twenty-four thousand eight hundred and two pounds. This gives an average of nearly twenty-one miles and seventy-three passengers for each train, which is about three and a half passengers per mile; giving an average for fare, at present paid, per average journey, of *fourteenpence only*.

Now, says Mr. Brandon, give me an universal threepenny fare everywhere, and I will promise you six times the traffic, which will give the united railway interest an excess of four millions of receipts, with very little, if any, addition to the expense of carrying an increased number of passengers. But that is merely supposing each person paid but threepence. It is calculated, however, that of the increased number of travellers one-seventh would ride first class at one shilling, and two-sevenths second class at sixpence. This would raise the annual return to thirty-two million pounds, for passenger traffic, instead of fourteen and three-quarter millions, as at present. That is, supposing that every person took his single ticket at threepence, sixpence, or a shilling. Mr. Brandon reckons, however, on a number of yearly tickets first and second class at twenty-five and fifteen pounds, respectively; but it is somewhat doubtful if a first-class passenger would calculate on making more than two hundred and fifty railway journeys per annum; and if not, it would manifestly answer his purpose better to pay one shilling per journey. Supposing, if you will, Mr. Brandon to be too sanguine in his estimate that traffic would be increased sixfold, still if it be only conceded as probable that it would increase threefold, the railway receipts would thus be two millions in excess of what they now are, without taking into account the reduction in expenditure resulting from unity of management!

But, says a bewildered taxpayer, where on earth is the four hundred and forty millions of money to come from, for the government to buy up the railway interest? Does it mean income tax, or is it to be a new national debt? No. It won't cost the government a single sixpence, nor the public either. And the shareholders will be better paid than ever they were paid before, and we shall all live happy ever afterwards, and go on, and on, and on, travelling everywhere with the magic carpet that costs nothing and yet pays everybody. Will that do? Well; each shareholder is to receive, in return for his shares, government railway stock, bearing interest at four and two-fifths per cent (the average percentage at present paid by railways). But, objects a shareholder now receiving a seven per cent dividend, it is not very likely I should agree to lose two and three-fifths per cent. per annum to please the public. No, my good sir—nobody wishes it, least of all Mr. Brandon. If you read his pamphlet you will see he proposes that just as a shareholder in a line paying less than four and two-fifths per cent shall receive so much less in amount of these government bonds, so you shall receive so much more as shall be equivalent to the full market value of your property, to be determined by a competent tribunal, besides giving you the additional security of government guarantee.

* Railways and the Public. By Raphael Brandon, F.R.I.B.A. Bell and Daldy, 1868.

You shall not be hardly dealt with. As the government will be able to make very much more of your property than your narrow-minded policy of conspiring together to raise fares and oppress the public, could ever conceive of, so that government can afford to be liberal to you in its estimate of the value to be given you in bonds for your shares. We passively submitted while you bought up our houses and lands over our heads, telling us it was all for our good; we have borne your shortsighted policy of extortion and discourtesy; but you have been a bad steward; your enterprise has neither paid you, nor benefitted us, and it is time the stewardship were taken from you by a power that shall begin to make you see that the public good and profitable railway management are not incompatible. Does some one say that the analogy between carrying a passenger and carrying a letter is false, because a letter is but half an ounce, and a passenger is a really meaty hundredweight? Which is, by far, the most expensive part of the postal system? The transit of a letter, or its delivery? Its delivery. Thank you. Granted, then, that the transit of a passenger is something more expensive than that of a letter, the passenger saves the most costly part of the postal outlay, because he delivers himself; the balance is therefore on the passenger's side, for the additional expense of transit is nothing to the saving in distribution and delivery. Unstamped passengers—like letters—will be charged double postage. The sad calamity of Abergele is only one more instance of the weighty fact that something like seventy-five per cent of railway accidents are attributable to the barbarous practice of running excursion trains. Had there been no excursion train to necessitate the shunting of those goods trucks at Abergele, the Irish mail would have proceeded in safety. Now, why are excursion trains run? Simply because the ordinary fare is thereby tacitly admitted to be excessive. The fact of the crowding of excursion trains, goes to prove how reduced rates increase traffic. Once adopt Mr. Brandon's scheme, and excursion trains will die out along with the need for them; and with that blessed event will come such an immunity from heartrending railway disasters as we have never yet witnessed.

But what about the price of those shorter journeys charged at sums already less than the proposed new stamp-tickets? Mr. Brandon proposes to leave all these as they are at present, or at most to subject them to revision with a view to reduction. Four years ago, Mr. Brandon first submitted his scheme of Railway Reformation to government. He has now printed it, appealing to the public. Probably nothing is more likely to commend the scheme to the favourable consideration of a new parliament than the attitude of the railway companies themselves, in perversely refusing to see that their blind policy of conspiracy is not only detrimental to public convenience, but madly injurious to their own property. There may be twenty flaws in Mr. Brandon's theory, yet he may be on the railway track of the future—whether or no, the day will come when a shilling's worth of stamps shall carry their purchaser from London to Aberdeen, and back, post his letters on the journey, receipt a couple of accounts, cover a modest acceptance at three months, and stamp the cheque that pays his expenses.

WALKS AND TALKS WITH THE PEOPLE.

NO. I. THE ROAD-MENDER.

Let me define what I mean by the "people." In one, and the best, sense of the word, we are all the people, from the Queen to the serving maid, and from the Prince of Wales to the pauper. But the word "people" has a fictitious and more restricted sense. In this paper, as in any others that may follow, as continuations of this subject, the people will be held to signify the great majority of mankind; the hewers of wood, and the drawers of water; all who live from hand to mouth, on the proceeds of the day's, the week's, or the month's wages; and all who have fallen from this honourable estate to the lower level of pauperism and crime.

I dearly love a day's walk in the country, through the beautiful green lanes of England, through the glens and straths, and over the mountain summits of Scotland, along the margin of the sea-shore, over the cliffs and downs, and wherever there are trees and green fields, or mountains, or a sight of lake or ocean to be obtained. In my walks I am never alone. I find companionship in the wild flowers by the road side, in the birds upon the bough, in the skylark poised high in mid-air, and dropping his jocund notes down upon the earth like so many diamonds of melody. I find occupation for the mind in the varying aspect of the clouds, and the landscape; a landscape which belongs to me, far more than to the lord of the manor, if I admire its beauty and he does not. But though I enjoy the solitudes of nature, I never hold aloof from the companionship of man. I am fond of talking to farm-labourers and shepherds, to beggars and to tramps, to travelling tinkers, gipsies, and showmen. I love to study the wild flowers and weeds of humanity, as much as the botanist loves to study and classify the herbs and flowers that are too lowly and of too ill-repute to find a place in the conservatory, but which belong nevertheless to the great garden of God. In my intercourse with the waifs and strays of our civilization, I always find that I can learn something, even from the most ignorant, if I take to them kindly, and do not offend their pride. The poor are as proud, after their own fashion, as the rich; and the most degraded of men knows that he belongs to the aristocracy of nature, and that, like Alexander Selkirk, he is "Lord of the fowl and the brute." He who hath sixpence is king, to the extent of sixpence, says the philosopher Emerson; and a man is a man, and among the noblest of animals, even when he is taken at his worst.

Though the rich may not know it or wish it, there is almost as great a distinction of "caste" in England as there is in India. It is something more than money that divides the rich from the poor, and the poor from the rich; and something else than money or education—or the absence of one or both—that separates trades from each other, or one class of work-people from another; and it is exceedingly difficult for one whose dress, manners, and conversation mark him as belonging to the professional, commercial, or gentlemanly classes to establish friendly and intimate relations with the peasantry and lower orders of labourers, or to get at the secrets of their moral and intellectual life. To call upon poor working people in their homes, suggests to them that you have a "mission"—religious or otherwise—to reform or lecture them, and they immediately—whether male or female—put on a mental armour to defy you. They do not like to be preached at, or lectured, or patronised, by "unco' guid" or "rigidly righteous" people; and though they will most likely take your money if you offer it, you will get but little insight into their mode of life or habits of thought, if you talk to them for a twelvemonth. They are on their guard against you, and will not admit you into their confidence—strive as hard as you may. If you sit with them in their beerhouses, they discover at a glance, in whatever way you may have dressed yourself, that you are not one of them; and they look upon you as a flock of sheep might look upon a wolf, or a congregation of crows upon an alien popinjay, who had obtruded into their clan or companionship. But when you meet with them on the country roads and tramp along with them for miles, not having forced yourself upon their company, but offering it or accepting it, as from man to man, you may often make the acquaintance of some very excellent people, from whom you can sometimes learn more than they can learn from you. If they have not the knowledge of books—and even in this respect some of them are by no means ignorant—they have the knowledge of things: and if they look upon man and nature, fate and circumstance, and on the rights and wrongs of the poor, with eyes different from yours, and, perhaps, from a totally opposite point of view, you acquire a new kind of experience, and, it may be, learn something of the previously unsuspected fires and forces that lie smouldering and latent in the hearts of the multitude, of which our lawgivers are often wholly unaware, and which they would not, perhaps, credit on any authority but that of their own experience. "It may be some entertainment," says Robert Burns, in a letter to his friend Robert Riddel, of Glenriddel, "to a curious observer of human nature to see how a ploughman thinks and feels under the pressure of love, ambition, anxiety, and grief, with like cares and passions, which, however diversified by the modes and manners of life, operate, I believe, pretty much alike on all the species." Agreeing with Robert Burns in this particular, not only as regards ploughmen, but labouring men of every description, I never neglect an opportunity to exchange ideas with them, and to inquire how and on what they live; what opinions they form of their own class, and of the classes above and below them; what notions, if any, they have of the government of their own or other countries; what are their enjoyments, their sorrows, their prejudices; whether they attend church or chapel; and what are their ideas of the divine government of the world, and their hopes, if they have any, of a hereafter.

One of the most respectable men I know, and whose acquaintance I made upon the highway where he does his daily work, is employed by a road contractor to keep three miles of the public road in order. The road winds through a beautiful country, within thirty miles of London, and need not be more particularly specified, lest my good friend the labourer should be pointed out too particularly to the notice of the public of his own neighbourhood. He bears an aristocratic name, and were he dressed in the garb of a gentleman would present a distinguished if not an aristocratic appearance. Pass him when I will, he is always at his work. He labours as if he liked his employment; he never loiters, or dozes, or takes unfair advantage of his paymaster to "scamp" the job in hand. He clears the pathway from weeds, trims the hedges, sees that the water-courses are clear, looks to the drains, scrapes the horse manure into little heaps by the road-side to be carted away by the agencies appointed for the purpose; levels the roadway wherever it gets worn into holes or ruts, by shovelling in the necessary amount of macadam; and every day has enough to occupy him in all these matters, and fill up the requisite number of hours that he is bound to labour. He has got, it seems, to be very much attached to his three miles of woodland road. He knows every tree on either side, and how old it is; he can point out those that are the favourite haunts of the squirrel and the dormouse; and he is acquainted with the common but not with the botanical names of all the hedge flowers and herbs in his district. He is close upon sixty years of age, but looks older, and is seldom to be seen without his short pipe in his mouth, unless when he is spoken to.

"What wages do you earn, Mr. Stanley?" I one day asked him. Stanley is not his name, but he has one quite as aristocratic.

"Two shillings a day."

"You have a wife and family?"

"A wife and five children."

"Are any of the children old enough to earn anything?"

"Not one. The oldest is only ten."

"And how can you feed them all, on two shillings a day?"

"God knows," he replied. "*I* don't. The wife manages somehow to get them bread and potatoes, though scarcely enough, and a little tea."

"No meat?"

"Meat! Well, we sometimes get a little bit of rusty bacon, just to grease the potatoes with; bacon that shopkeepers, or clerks, or servant girls would not look at, but which we manage to relish. I suppose because we are hungry."

"Is the Sunday's dinner no better than the week day one?"

"Well, yes, we buy the offal, as the butchers call it, when it is cheap, as it generally is in the hot weather when it will not keep long."

"What do you mean by offal?"

"I mean the heart, liver, and entrails. The wife can cook a little, and chops up these things with onions and salt, to make them savoury, and hide the taste of putrefaction when the things are cheap and not over fresh. When I was a young man, I did not much mind the stale flavour. I had a stomach and an appetite like an ostrich then; but now that I am growing old, I am getting particular, and prefer cheese to meat. Bread and cheese and onions is not bad fare, after all, if a man gets enough of it."

"I see you manage to spare a little out of your earnings for tobacco. Surely you could do without that."

"I cannot do without 'baccy,' but I spend very little—next to nothing, I may say—on this article. I find almost all that I need, upon the road. The gentlemen that smoke so much throw away the cigar ends, and I pick up sufficient during the day, to cut or untwist, to supply my pipe. If you stopped my 'baccy' I should lose the best friend I have in the world —next to my wife."

"You seem a strong man. Do you drink beer?"

"I am a strong man, thank God; and I hope there is no harm in liking a glass of good ale or beer."

"Not the least. I know I like it, if it be good, and shall have much pleasure in treating you to a pint."

"Thank you kindly. I never begged a glass of beer in my life, and would scorn to do it, but I never refused one if offered. People are pretty good to me, and I get two or three pints in a week, or more than that, from acquaintances on the road, and from strangers who see me working in the hot sun. But the beer gets awfully bad now-a-days. The publicans are not honest. They put water in their beer first, and that makes it weak; and then they put drugs into it, to make it strong again. I think such men ought to be punished. It's worse than poaching, in my opinion."

"And in mine, too; and if I could have my way, I would make such an example of some of the poisoners of the poor man's beer, as would create a talk in the world."

"Yes, sir, it's cruel; and the more cruel because it is the poor, who can't help themselves, who are made to suffer."

"Do you earn daily wages all the year round?"

"No. Whenever there is a hard frost, or the snow lies upon the ground, I have to shut up. In those times I earn nothing, though they are just the times when a man requires most. Coals are dear, but we get them at half price at a place in the village, where the gentry subscribe to let us have them. And then I have the privilege of gathering sticks and windfalls, which helps a little."

"And when you are too old to work, what then?" I asked, suggestively.

"Well, there is but one place, the workhouse, and that other place, the grave. If it were not for the workhouse, I sometimes think that the squires and great people would not have such a nice time of it as they have. *I* don't want to go there however. I should like to work on, and earn my wages to the last. England's a poor place for such as I am, at the best. There are too many of us. That's the truth."

"Did you never think of going to America?"

"Many and many a time; but I never could save enough to pay my own passage over, let alone that of the wife and children. And I'm too old now."

"You can read?"

"Ay, well enough; and I like reading too, especially the newspapers."

"Can you afford to take in a penny paper?"

"No, indeed, but I borrow one, when it's a week old, from the grocer or the butcher. I get the news stale, as I do my victuals, but contrive to learn what is going on in the world."

"Do you read in the evening, after your work's done?"

"Well, sometimes, not always. I like to have a talk with other people, and hear the news of the place. Sunday's my day for reading."

"Do you attend church?"

"Not oftener than I can help, for I fall asleep, and I don't like to set such a bad example —and to be nudged by somebody as if I was committing a sin. Besides, I snore sometimes. I wish I could keep awake at church, but I can't. So I stay away and read the newspaper, and sometimes lie in bed half the day, and bless it as a day of rest."

"Do you study the politics or the news?"

"I don't care much about politics. I have no vote. I'm nobody. But if I had a vote, I'd vote for any gentleman who'd abolish the game laws, and punish those wretches who put drugs into the beer. And I should like to vote for any one who'd bring mutton from Australia or South America, so that I could get meat instead of offal, and live as well as a footman or a housemaid. But this won't be in my time, I suppose."

"I'm afraid not, though it's not impossible. There's food enough in the world for all mankind, if we could but bring the food to the mouths that require it. Do none of your children go to school?"

"Yes, the two eldest, boys of nine and ten, go to school in the winter; but in the summer they get a job now and then as crow boys and sparrow boys, to frighten the birds from the corn, and earn a few shillings to buy clothes with. They'll be able to read and write, and do a little cyphering, I suppose, by the time they are fourteen or fifteen."

"And your own clothes; how do you manage?"

"Well, clothes last a good while with care and mending. I've got the suit I was married in, and it looks pretty good still. Boots are the most expensive articles that I have to buy. The wife manages; and she is a clever woman, as I have reason to know. She goes out charing sometimes, and gets herself a little bit of finery, and a few ribbons. Lord love her! She deserves them. And you see I am a sober man, and waste no money in drink, though, as I said, I like my beer, and I like it good, and would like to have the pillory once more in our parish. Wouldn't I pelt *some* people if they got there!"

I took care that the road-mender had some good beer that day—Bass's bottled—which he highly relished, and was unfeignedly grateful for. I had the pleasure too, of giving him as much money as would purchase a bottle of the same for "the missus." He is, it will be seen, a very favourable specimen of the English peasantry—an honest, hard-working, cheerful, but hopeless man; born to be a drudge, eking out his life with the aid of charitable coals and chance kindnesses; one who had but little idea of, or care for, the promises of religion—a good man in his way, but practically as much a heathen as his compeers in Greece in the days of Plato. He harboured no resentment against, and entertained no jealousy of, his superiors in station and worldly wealth, and spoke ill of nobody but the adulterators of his beer. The portrait is from the life; and were there no worse or more ignorant people in England than he, England would be a better place than it is.

TRICKS.

If people commit crimes, we can give them into custody, and so get rid of them. Acquaintances who are the slaves of vicious indulgence, generally take pains to conceal their propensities, and we are therefore not annoyed by them; but against habitual tricks we are defenceless. I once knew an elderly gentleman who poked the man he was conversing with, in the ribs with great force and a sharp forefinger, whenever either said anything which he thought remarkable. The trick is amusing enough when represented on the stage, but in real life and to persons who are ticklish, it is an insufferable nuisance. The last time this man made me his victim was after a political dinner in the days of the Anti-Corn Law League, when, being quite out of my depth, I was naturally anxious to impress the assembled guests with a conviction of my profoundness, and had partially succeeded, when my troublesome friend caused the most sapient of my remarks to terminate in a wriggle and a giggle with his cruel digit of approbation. I gave him a wide berth after that, and he has now gone to that bourne where there can be little satisfaction in poking his neighbours' ribs; for his finger would go between them unresisted. It is an absurd fancy, and yet I should not like to be buried next him.

Some persons have a trick of winking. I could mention a most polite and modest young man who most desperately offends ladies, unaware of his unfortunate habit. The offer, "Will you allow me to give you a glass of champagne?" at a ball supper, is, taken alone, a civility; but if accompanied, as ten to one it would be in Brown's case, with a wink, it might annoy some ladies into hysterics, especially if they were really addicted to a little stimulant in private. Yet, however much shocked she might be, no recipient of one of Brown's offensive though unconscious movements of the eyelid could be more astonished than I was once, by a good but prim old lady of strong religious principles, who uttered a solemn dogma for my benefit, and then—winked at me! For a moment I thought it was Mephistopheles himself who sat before me, disguised in elderly female garb; but a continual repetition of the trick explained the mystery.

It is difficult to relinquish tricks of a different nature; gnawing the nails, or a pen for example. I knew a man who used to devour his pocket-handkerchiefs while reading, until a female relative got him to transfer his attentions to an ivory paper cutter, and he positively ate one in about a fortnight. It was tooth versus tusk, and he beat the elephant. However, he was a careless man about the affairs of this world, and lived in an atmosphere of metaphysics. Smith, lieutenant and adjutant of the Hundred and Fiftieth, raised from the ranks for most exceptional good conduct and devoted heroism, was anxious beyond all things to break himself of every habit which he had picked up in a lower grade of life. He succeeded most wonderfully; as he was a gentleman at heart, so he acquired the manners and the tone of conversation of a gentleman; but one little trick beat him. If he sat down to a rubber, he could not for the life of him help wetting his thumb when he dealt the cards. Sometimes he would catch himself doing it, and mutter "there I go again!" But he never got over it, and consequently declined to play at whist, of which he was very fond, when strangers were present. And yet that man had conquered military routine and social prejudice! An old schoolfellow of mine had a trick which is mentioned, I think, by Boswell as having been a peculiarity of Doctor Johnson's: the trick of touching things. When he had reached the door of a room he was leaving, he would return to touch a book, the back of a chair, or a table. No matter how great a hurry he might be in, he obeyed the impulse; indeed the more flurried and nervous he was, the stronger it became. When late for school, to which he was running from the house where he boarded, I have seen him stop, and turn back three times to touch a tree: though in those days the wasted moments probably represented a flogging, of which he had an unwonted horror. I have often wondered what became of him as a man. Could a

clergyman go down the pulpit stairs again after having mounted them half-way, to touch the eagle at the bottom? Could a barrister leave his seat every now and then, for the purpose of laying a hurried hand on the dock?

Tricks of speech are well-nigh universal, but as they are for the most part picked up from persons among whom we habitually live, they do not attract much attention, unless one speaks often in public. A man who has constantly to make speeches, ought to guard most carefully against little peculiarities of diction, particularly if he be a preacher. There is a story told of a clergyman who was constantly using the expression "rhyme or reason." Ten or twenty times in a single sermon he would bring it in. At last an intimate friend told him privately that the constant recurrence of this phrase excited unseemly mirth among his parishioners, and he determined to break himself of it. So he wrote his next sermon out in full, instead of making notes only, as had been his custom, and was careful to omit the objectionable phrase. "How did you like your sermon to-day?" a lady was asked, on returning from church, by a chance visitor at her house. "Very much," she replied. "There was neither rhyme nor reason in it."

Some subscribers to lending libraries have a most disgraceful trick of pencilling amateur notes on the margins of books they read. Sometimes they content themselves with notes of interrogation, or of admiration: these last being by no means intended to express the sentiment implied by the name. When they really admire they underline the text, and write at the side, "Perfectly true," or "I like this." A fact which might prove interesting to the author, if one can imagine a man getting his own book out of a library, but which cannot be of the slightest importance to any one else. More frequently, however, the marginal notes are of an unfavourable character. "Stuff," "idiotic folly," are common criticisms, and sometimes the opinion of the reader on the whole work is summed up on the final page in these words: "A more stupid book I never read in my life!" In some very flagrant instances two annotating readers differ, and the later one indulges in scornful criticism of the remarks of the former, to the extreme annoyance of after-borrowers of the book, who are curious, and cannot pass the half legible pencillings undeciphered. How much simpler and more serviceable it would be for critic number two to express his opinion of critic number one with a piece of india-rubber.

What *can* there be in the perusal of the daily journals and periodical literature in general, to misguide men into tricks? It seems to have that effect. I never frequented a reading-room without being annoyed by the little nervous habits of some of its visitors. One man will make a tremendous noise in his throat: not once or twice, which would matter very little, but at regular intervals, like a passing bell, and with much the same effect upon the nerves. It is impossible to help listening for its recurrence, and the difficulty of fixing the attention upon the page before one's eyes is very great, under such circumstances. Another man will cross one leg over the other and swing it, with an effect quite dazzling to his neighbour; but the worst offender of all, is the reader who has a trick of resting his toe on the ground and causing his leg to vibrate in a distressing manner, of which I despair of conveying any idea unless you have suffered from the infliction. The more interested he grows in what he is reading, the faster goes the limb, and you cannot defend yourself, as in the case of the swinging nuisance, by holding a broad sheet before your eyes and so shutting him out of sight, for after a little time the vibration becomes perceptible over the whole room, until you might imagine yourself on board a steamer. Nay, it is far worse than the shaking caused by paddle-wheels or screw, for that is so honestly violent that the system soon becomes accustomed to it: whereas the tremulous motion excited by the vibrating leg, is of an irritating description ever young and fresh. A constant reader at our local Athenæum (who indeed almost lives there), has all these tricks, and one more. On Wednesdays and Saturdays he collects the weeklies as they are brought in, and sits upon them while he studies the newspapers. Then he draws them out, one by one, and reads them in a very leisurely manner. The committee have several times been appealed to, to point out to him what a selfish and exasperating habit this is; but they insist on condoning his peculiarities, because he is a learned man and took a high degree at his university. But this is wrong. Tricks should surely count before honours.

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HESTER'S HISTORY.

A New Serial Tale.

CHAPTER XIII. MRS. HAZELDEAN ACTS UPON HER INSTRUCTIONS.

Post hour was not breakfast hour in the village of Glenluce. The postman had to travel some thirty miles by outside car from the nearest rather important town, at which the letters for the mountains arrived early in the morning. Consequently, people in this neighbourhood read their despatches from their friends—or their enemies—over their supper table, and take their news with them to their pillows, instead of looking for it beside their plate in the morning. The post-horn is heard sounding through the village just as the children in the cottages are going to bed. They can hear the first echo of it before they sleep, blowing down to them from some winding of the high road, around the hill above the bay and the village street. To many a little dreaming ear it has come like the "horns of Elfland faintly blowing;" while to older watchers, wide awake and abroad, it has sounded terrible and significant, as the first blast from a war trumpet. For I speak of seventy years ago, when all the heartstrings of Ireland were strained, from east to west, from north to south, and a fearful sympathy thrilled its veins.

Autumn evenings are wont to wear out the remnant of their summer balminess much sooner in wild Irish bye-ways, haunted by sea breeze and mountain mist, than they are known to do in regions more civilised and less moist. Evening fires blaze on the long-idle hearthstones of drawing-rooms under the shelter of the everlasting hills, whilst people sitting close to the walls of cities are yet lingering by their open windows, loath to stir. First heralds of the winter are the roaring of such homely flames. And so pleasant and genial an under-current of melody is kept up by the piping and whistling of the new wood upon the hearth, so fragrant is the perfume from the long-glowing peat logs, that our farewell shake hands with the summer grows less reluctant. We watch her slow retreat from our gardens and dingles; see the sad cloak of her departure dropping gradually over the gay bravery of attire which was her wearing; we put our feet, which have rambled, upon the stool before our fender, and wonder that we can hardly bear to sigh.

The post brought a letter to Mrs. Hazeldean one evening, when her first autumn fire had just been kindled in her grate. Mrs. Hazeldean at her tea-table, with her letter spread before her, made the centre of a picture such as most eyes would like to see. It was not in her pretty drawing-room that she made tea for herself and husband, albeit, her upper windows admitted a noble view of the mountains, around which, on this evening, cold mists were wrapping winding-sheets. Mrs. Hazeldean's teapot had made its way into her dining-room. Her garden lay stretched beyond her window, before her eyes. Her geraniums, still blooming, clung together in burning circles, her late roses yet lingered in sparse blossoms on their trees, and her ferns, scenting rain in the moist air, lifted their long delicate plumes and grew green in the chill dews.

So the warmth of deeply-coloured flowers, set in the cool greyness of the air, filled the space of the lower window, while the firelight took impertinently to itself all the credit for making brightness in the room. It gambolled over everything in the ecstacies of this conceit, books, picture, the curtains, the tea-kettle. It fell upon the floor in adoration, and kissed the hem of Mrs. Hazeldean's purple robe. It played with her litle well-shod foot; but glanced off the fair foldings of her white muslin vest, as if it felt the inferiority of its own warmth when so near the fervent heat of her most womanly heart. It was restless, as if it felt that it could not have things all its own way until the dusk should have quite fallen, and extinguished the rival brilliance of the flower-beds without. But in the meantime the new fire that sent it forth intensified its glowing in the ardour of its delight, and sang songs to itself loudly and cheerily. It had resumed its magic empire within the dwellings of men. It had recovered its lost influence over human heart and limb.

Mrs. Hazeldean rested her cheek in her hand as she read. Her head was leaned aside a little; a head of such rare shape, both for intellect and womanly beauty that people involuntarily wondered while they delighted in looking at it. Ignorant people, who would have stared if you had told them such was the fact, put faith,

without knowing it, in the moulding of that head. It spoke to them of her judgment, just as her smile spoke of her heart. And it was clothed, not disguised, with a tight-fitting covering of satin-smooth hair, seamed with silver threads, which last had made their appearance—too soon if we would speak of fitting time—not too soon if we would only speak of beauty. No nut-brown tresses, nor golden curls, ever more enriched the head that wore them than did those gleaming braids passing the richly-coloured cheeks. Her broad brow, full of grace, shone with the goodness and power of all the thoughts that continually passed behind it. Her soft hazel eyes seemed black sometimes, from intensity of expression, as well as the shadows that lay above them from their strong dark settings. They were mirthful, tender, or solemn, those eyes, and they always carried sunshine to whatever side they turned. As for her mouth, it began and finished the perfection of her face. It was so firm and yet so indulgent, so sweet, and yet so grave; people listened, and looked at it, and were won. Its smile was so good, and said so much, that its word could scarce be better, or say more. But when the two came forth together it were little wonder if a hard heart should give way in sheer surprise. The habitual expression of her face was a serene look of happy content, as if she had a secret joy somewhere, which would not consent to be altogether hidden—under which dwelt a strong presence of mental resources, quietly basking in the sunshine of her temper, ready to spring at a moment's notice into vigorous action.

Dr. Hazeldean sat opposite to his wife, and he also read his letters. He was a pleasant-looking fresh-complexioned gentleman, with a face betraying high intellectual culture, as well as a peculiar generosity and benevolence of disposition. If one wanted to know his opinion of his wife, one might just watch him looking at her across the table. "The heart of her husband trusteth in her," said that look. "She will render him good and not evil all the days of her life."

"Will you read this, John, and tell me what you think?" said Mrs. Hazeldean. And she handed him her letter from the Mother Augustine.

The doctor read and shook his head.

"It is a scheme worthy of Mary and of you," he said; "and if only you and Mary were to be the actors in carrying it out, I should feel no doubt that you would make it flourish to perfection. But, considering the style of the people at the castle, I don't think such a poor girl would be happy in the position."

"I can see that danger myself," said Mrs. Hazeldean; "yet Mary seems so anxious about the matter; and if the girl is now in the keeping of Lady Humphrey, who was Judith Blake, why I would rather see her out of it, if I happened to be her friend."

"Which you will be, I foresee, if she comes here," said the doctor.

"Which I will be, please God!" said Mrs. Hazeldean. And the doctor took up his paper with a smile, and his wife poured out the tea.

The next morning, when Doctor Hazeldean was seated in his gig, his wife appeared, in her bonnet, in the doorway.

"I am going to pay a visit at the castle," she said, "and I want you to leave me a bit up the glen, on my way."

And so a bit up the glen she was left. The mountains opened before her as she walked, after that, and the village and the bay lay behind and far beneath her. The glen unfolded its windings, and the river that ran meeting her, which she had seen playing with the sedges in the lower ground, grew noisy and angry and picked a quarrel with all the stones in its way. Purple hills loomed high in the distance, looking through their wreaths of silver mist. Autumn woods lay in the lap of the hills, and stood round about the grey chimneys of the castle.

Mrs. Hazeldean paid many visits on her way, as she went along; for all things knew her on this road, and the humblest creature felt no awe at her approach. Even the hen-mothers pecking about the doors of the thatched cottages just blinked her a bright look and did not hurry themselves to drive their broods out of her way. The children lifted their heads and laughed right in her face. The very cows looked up from their grazing and approved of her as she passed by. Many a brightening face was thrust to greet her through open doorways; many a welcome awaited her within, from expectant sick people beyond the thresholds; many a homely chair was dusted that she might rest.

There was not an interest of these poor people that was too little for her sympathy. Were they sick or were they in trouble, here was their friend. Not alone the sister of the late baronet, who had been their master, but a sister of their own; never impatient at their ignorance, never scornful of their poverty, never angry at their mistakes, never weary of their complaints; not sweeping in, like Lady Helen, in a grand dress, breaking her feathers and her temper against the low lintels of their doors, overwhelming them to confusion with a few words of condescension, chucking the frightened children under the chin—maybe giving a present like an alms, and sweeping out again; more like the old lady, her dead mother, but warmer, less stately, more familiar.

Most like of all to Miss Mary and Sir Archie, though with an amount of experience, and a keen insight into all the little needs of humble lives which even they did not possess in the same degree. These two had been her children, her disciples; though not a great many years younger than herself.

Just of late there had been many a wild torrent of grief which Mrs. Hazeldean had been called upon to stem. Though the horrors that were abroad in the country had not actually set foot upon the glens, yet scarce a cottager of the mountains but had some friend, elsewhere, who was in prison or in torture, who had been

beggared, or put to death. Pale faces were getting plentiful in the fields and on the roads, and tears by the firesides.

There was a fine new approach to the castle, through great gates, round a sward, near a deer park. Lady Helen's carriage horses had room to prance in the avenue. But there was another way of coming upon the castle, by a wilder bit of glen than had been passed. In ancient times there had been a moat, and a part of it yet remained, in which lilies multiplied and sedges mustered, while wild weeds and flowers dipped and dabbled in its margin. This had been the former entrance to the castle, and the old drawbridge still arched its brown back over the water, throwing a solemn black shadow amidst the whiteness of the lilies. Crossing this old bridge one came upon the most ancient portion of the castle, now worn into disuse, with a little black door, no bigger than a postern gate, set low in the wall, studded with large iron nails. It had once been the main entrance, but trees were growing about it now. Farther on, at either side of the bridge, this remnant of a moat wandered away into dryness; and in its bed here and there long ferns had struck their roots, rich ribbon-grass had straggled up, bringing with it scarlet poppies, the creamy meadow sweet, and the crimson tassels of the lusmore blossoms.

Lady Helen Munro, Miss Janet Golden, a King Charles spaniel, and a white French poodle, were all in the drawing-room when Mrs. Hazeldean arrived. Lady Helen had just issued from her dressing-room, Miss Golden had just returned from her morning ride. Lady Helen, in white, with pink ribbons, was extended on a couch, showering kisses upon one dog. Miss Janet in her riding-habit was teasing the other with her whip.

"Ah, dear Margaret, how are you?" said Lady Helen, languidly holding up her cheek, which she expected should come in contact with Mrs. Hazeldean's bright lips.

"How do you do, Mrs. Hazeldean?" said Miss Golden, contriving to hold out her jewelled hand between the pauses of her laughter over the dog.

"Dear Margaret, how you trot about!" said Lady Helen. "You are as nimble and as fresh as a girl. And I—see how languid and good-for-nothing I am. It is all in the constitution of one's family."

"Doggie, doggie, doggie! why don't you laugh?" said Miss Golden, poking the spaniel with her whip. But this must only have been her sport. She could not have meant him to laugh at Lady Helen.

Lady Helen was fifty-five years of age, and Mrs. Hazeldean was forty. Lady Helen always spoke as though Mrs. Hazeldean were the elder; but they were sisters-in-law, which at least placed them quite on an equality. Mrs. Hazeldean's silvered braids could surely never look so juvenile as Lady Helen's jetty ringlets. True, Lady Helen's long handsome face was thin and full of lines, but then that was to be accounted for by her delicacy of constitution. Dear Margaret's soft, bright cheeks were the result of her perfect health. Besides, Lady Helen was the daughter of an earl, and blue blood is pale and cool. Mrs. Hazeldean was only the daughter of a baronet, and had been pleased to marry a doctor of medicine. And dear Margaret was well known to be a little common in her tastes, which was, no doubt, the reason why her lips remained so red, and her eyes kept so undignified a brightness. But Lady Helen had been a beauty of an aristocratic type.

"I hope you have not brought a bundle of horrors with you, Margaret," said Lady Helen. "I don't want to hear anything about the state of the country."

In truth, Mrs. Hazeldean so seldom walked up to the castle, merely for the sake of paying a morning call, that it was no wonder she should be suspected of having a further motive in coming. She did not hesitate now in unfolding her business.

"Well, I must say it was very thoughtful of Mary to attend to my commission so quickly," said Lady Helen, with more spirit in her manner than she had yet shown. "But why did she not write to me, I wonder? Come over here, Janet, my dear, and let us have a pleasant talk about our new dressmaker."

Miss Janet came over reluctantly, swinging her whip. She was a sumptuous-looking little person, with a tight plump figure and a jewel in each ear as large as a half-crown piece. She had roguish dark eyes and a graceful self-sufficient-looking little nose. What with her pretty white hands, and her fair smooth cheeks, and her glossy dark curls and glancing white teeth, she would certainly have been charming all over, but for a sarcastic little twist which came and went about her mouth. Yet some people thought that this last gave a peculiar piquancy to her countenance.

"Can she make everything?" Lady Helen went on, eagerly. "Ball dresses and dinner dresses? morning robes and spensers? Can she copy the Paris fashions from a picture?"

"I have heard," said Mrs. Hazeldean, "that she was chosen by her mistress to compose a court dress for a duchess; so I think you may safely trust yourself to dine in a gown of her making at Glenluce."

"Then why does she come here?" asked Lady Helen, all alive. "Oh, we shall surely never be lucky enough to get her amongst us! She will be certain to stay in London and make her fortune. It would be cruel to ask her to bury her genius alive."

"Not cruel, if she wishes it," said Mrs. Hazeldean, judiciously repressing a smile. "There is one reason for her wishing it, which I am charged to explain. This girl is not an ordinary dressmaker, who would drop her h's and make friends with the housemaids. She is well born, well bred, and educated; she is young, and an orphan; she would like a quiet home with people who would be kind to her.

Mary considers her a treasure, as I have told you; but she has bid me declare to you that she will not allow her to come here unless you promise to treat her at all points as a lady."

Lady Helen opened her eyes and looked aghast.

"What! make her an equal?" she exclaimed. "Bring one's dressmaker into one's drawing-room! How ridiculously like Mary's notions! Janet, love, what do you think of such a proposal?"

"Rather high a price to pay for the making of a gown, I think," said Miss Janet, with that curl coming over her lips, "to have the seamstress at one's elbow at the dinner-table."

"But then it is not the case of merely making a gown," said Lady Helen; "my maid can turn out a neat gown when necessary. This is a case of style and ornament and fashion, my darling. It were worth some little sacrifice to secure such results. But then, as you say, to have one's seamstress at the dinner-table! Dear Margaret, are there no other terms to be made than these?"

Mrs. Hazeldean laughed heartily.

"What a trouble I have brought to you!" she said. "But I said nothing about a dinner-table. Mary will be satisfied, I dare say, if you keep her little friend from amongst the servants."

Lady Helen heaved a sigh of relief.

"I can readily promise that," she said, gratefully, "and I will engage to show her kindness and attention. Let me see. I can give her a couple of rooms in the east tower, above Madge. And, by the way, that reminds me that poor Madge will expect to be invited to this conclave."

A bell having been rung and a message sent, a fourth lady made her appearance in the room.

This lady was of age uncertain, of looks ill-favoured, and in manner of the style known as "flighty." She wore a short yellow gown of Chinese silk, trimmed with rows of little flounces to the knee. She wore sandalled shoes and mittens, and beautiful large clocks upon her stockings. She wore a band going round her head, fastened by a little brooch upon her forehead. In this brooch was a tiny miniature of her lover of bygone days, who had been drowned in the deep seas on his way home to make her his wife. This lady was a second cousin of Lady Helen; not mad, as had sometimes been startlingly proved, but a little more than "odd," to say the least. She was the Honourable Madge M'Naughten by name, and never forgot the dignity of her title. It had come to her late in life, without bringing any lightening of a poverty that had half-crazed her youth. But it had soothed her so much that, after its acquisition, she had consented to accept the bounty of her cousin, Lady Helen. And she was known to all comers, never as Miss M'Naughten, but always, for her satisfaction, as the "Honourable Madge."

"Now, Madge," said Lady Helen, "we are going to have a talk. Here is Margaret going to find us the very thing we want. The dressmaker, you remember, whom you and I have quarrelled about!"

"I like flounces, you know," said the Honourable Madge, sitting down by Mrs. Hazeldean with a confidential air. "They furnish the figure so much, especially when it is thin. And I have always been as thin as a whipping-post. Members of noble families are often observed to be thin."

And Miss Madge shook out all her little fluttering frills, and drew up her figure, which, indeed, had somewhat the outlines of a broomstick.

"You shall be flounced up to your neck, if you have the fancy," said Lady Helen; who, to do her justice, was always indulgent and considerate with this cousin whom she sheltered. "But, dear Margaret," she continued, "I trust there will be no mistake about the attainments of this young person. Poor Mary, you know, had never much taste for style, even in the world. I should like to see a specimen of the young woman's work before I made the final arrangements to bring her here."

"Dolls!" cried the Honourable Madge, clapping her mittens together in excitement; "dolls, my dear Helen, would be the plan. Fit them as if they were women, flounce them and trim them. Copy them from the fashion-books and send them in a box."

"An excellent plan, I declare!" said Lady Helen. "I will write about it to Mary myself."

Mrs. Hazeldean's business had now come to a conclusion. "I think it will be better to to say nothing about Lady Humphrey," she reflected, as she retraced her steps down the glen.

So letters came flying from Glenluce to the Mother Augustine. "I think they will treat her fairly; we must try and make her happy," wrote Mrs. Hazeldean. But Lady Helen's letter was all about the dolls.

Therefore Hester set to work to furnish specimens of her skill. Pretty scraps of silks and satins were procured for her, some well-shaped little dolls, and some pictures out of the latest book of fashions. Sometimes she brought her sewing to a little table in the convalescent ward, by the bedside of the young milliner who loved to talk about the country. Hester also might be sent away to live among fresh hills. Would the sick girl tell her more about the mountains? And the sick girl told her more. And the time sped pleasantly by. And the little dolls were clothed and sent away.

And the dolls did their duty. Judging from her letters Lady Helen's cup of happiness was now full. She was anxious only to receive the young dressmaker under her roof. If propriety had permitted it she could almost have taken her into her arms.

Lady Humphrey was duly informed of the Mother Augustine's exertions, and their success. I will not pause to expose her private feelings on the occasion; neither have I time to repeat the thanks which she poured out in

the convent parlour. The only thing which it is necessary to relate is the fact that she insisted that her dear Hester, so soon to be torn away from her, should pay her at least a short visit at Hampton Court before her departure.

This Hester unwillingly agreed to. Yet why should it have been unwillingly? Was ever doating mother more careful and fond than Lady Humphrey was daily proving herself now? If Hester had been about to become a bride, this good friend could not have furnished her with a more generous trousseau. She should not be a shabby Hester going to live among fine people; she should not want for a becoming gown to appear in, when that time should arrive, which Lady Humphrey foresaw, when a glimpse of her pretty face should be desired in a castle drawing-room. She should not be kept away in the background through the need of fitting attire; she should be furnished at all points and for all seasons like a lady.

And Hester was confounded and overwhelmed with much bounty. Had she ever, indeed, been sufficiently grateful to Lady Humphrey? Had it not been her own perverse nature which had hindered her loving this friend? Now, when the hour of separation, perhaps for ever, was drawing near, her heart swelled in regret, and reproached her with sore pain.

And there were many little instructions and advices to be given.

"You will write to me constantly, of course, my dear love?" said Lady Humphrey; "and you will always speak of me kindly, will you not, my little Hester?"

"Oh, Lady Humphrey!" said Hester, blushing guiltily, but with sincere pain for the past, and a desire to be very loyal in the future.

"I may not have been wise, my love," said Lady Humphrey, "but I have acted for the best, as far as I could see. And I wish to warn you, my dear, that these people to whom you are going are possessed by a prejudice against me. We were friends in former days, but mischief was made between us. Yet long absence has not deprived me of all interest in their fate."

Lady Humphrey paused. Hester was silent and surprised, not knowing what to say.

"And you, too, dear Hester," Lady Humphrey continued, presently, "you also must feel an interest in these good people, who have been so kind to you—in that dear lady of the convent, and in her brother, who did you so important a service."

"Yes," said Hester, readily.

"Well, then, my love, I will entrust you with a secret," said Lady Humphrey, lowering her voice and with an air of deep concern. "There is a way in which you and I can be of use to these worthy people. We can save them, perhaps, from trouble—from destruction."

"Can we?" said Hester, with open amazed eyes.

"You know, my dear love, that the country of Ireland to which you are going is disturbed by revolutionary troubles—nay, you need not turn pale, all is peace in the neighbourhood of Glenluce. But Sir Archie Munro may be implicated—may be suspected of encouraging the people elsewhere to rebellion. Do you understand me, dear Hester?"

"I understand," said Hester, faintly.

"In case such things were proved against him he must be seized—perhaps hanged," said Lady Humphrey. "But it may lie with you and me to avert this danger from his head."

"How?" asked Hester, fearfully.

"By watching over his interests," said Lady Humphrey, with enthusiasm. "I am here, you see, in London, and I have friends," she added mysteriously. "You watch well over Sir Archie's movements at Glenluce. Write me constantly, and describe events without reserve. Thus kept constantly informed of all his doings, I shall be able, from my knowledge of facts, to keep all danger and suspicion from his path."

The very vagueness of this speech gave it an especially terrible meaning for Hester. She had heard of troubles in Ireland, but she had not thought about them until now. And she was to do so great a service to these friends who had been so good to her. And this was Lady Humphrey, whom she had feared, who was enabling her to do it. Oh, how stupid, and blind, and unfeeling, she had been!

"You must remember, my little Hester, that this is a secret between you and me," said Lady Humphrey, by-and-by, having watched some time in silence how her instructions had been received, how they had sunk in and settled down, with a great hold, in Hester's mind. "You will promise never to repeat what I have just said to you. It would be terrible to give a hint of it to our dear friend, the Mother Augustine. It would needlessly alarm and give her pain. You will promise?"

"I promise," said Hester, solemnly; then laid hold of Lady Humphrey's hand and kissed it.

"God bless you, Lady Humphrey!" she said. "You are a good, good woman!"

Pierce Humphrey arrived one evening to bid adieu to little Hester. He had written to her apologising for his conduct at the ball, and she had long ago forgotten the offence; so also, it would seem, had he himself.

"So you are going to Glenluce, little Hester?" said Mr. Pierce. "You are going to live under the roof with my Janet. What a friendship you and she will strike up!"

"Oh, no!" said Hester, quickly. "That is not likely, indeed; for you know I am not going as a lady."

"Pooh! nonsense!" said Pierce Humphrey, laughing. "You could not be anything else, if you tried. Yes, you and she will surely be good friends. And I think you will say a word for me, little Hester?"

"That I will," said Hester, smiling, "if I am allowed to have a chance."

"Nay, I think you will make a chance," said Pierce, coaxingly. "You must talk to her

about me, and you will write to me. That you will, like a good kind girl. And you will tell me how she speaks of me, and what she thinks of that great baronet, Sir Archie Munro. You will promise to do this?"

"I will do it if I can," said Hester, doubtfully.

"That means that you will do it. And look here," said Pierce Humphrey, "if she seems at all to listen to you, you must give her back this ring; it is her own, which I gave her once, and which she returned to me in a letter. You must tell her that I sent it to her; and if that does not touch her heart," said foolish Pierce, with a great sigh, "I am sure I know of nothing else that will."

After some doubts and difficulties, half expressed, but strongly felt, Hester was simple enough to consent to take the ring. And soon after this she returned to the Mother Augustine; and then there arose the question of how to ship her off to Ireland.

FARM AND COLLEGE.

That part of the holding of a farmer or landowner which pays best for cultivation is the small estate within the ring fence of his skull. Let him begin with the right tillage of his brains, and it shall be well with his grains, roots, herbage and forage, sheep and cattle; they shall thrive and he shall thrive. "Practice with science" is now the adopted motto of the Royal Agricultural Society. Amateur farming by men whose real business lies in other trades, and who, without any true scientific training, play with a few of the results of science, cannot pay and never ought to pay. The farmer's occupation is the oldest, the most necessary, and, when rightly pursued, one of the worthiest a man can follow. Of late years it has risen to the dignity of a liberal profession, and the young Englishman may go through part of his special training for it in a well appointed college.

This is the Royal Agricultural College at Cirencester. After fighting an uphill fight for twenty years, it stands now upon higher ground than any other institution of its kind. There is, indeed, no other of its kind in England; but of institutions for the practical and scientific training of the farmer out of England; among the agricultural academies in France, Germany, and elsewhere; not one, we believe, is at the same time satisfactory and self supporting. The Imperial Model Farm and School of Agriculture at Grignon, founded in 1826, and the chief of several established by Louis Philippe, receives subvention from the State, and the pupils upon its one thousand two hundred acres are under highly qualified teachers paid by the French Government. The German academies and experimental stations are also endowed by their governments. In Ireland, again, our own Government has founded agricultural schools. An unendowed agricultural school, founded in 1821 at Bannow, Wexford, only lived seven years. But since that time the Commissioners of National Education have made agricultural training schools part of their system. The chief of these training schools is at Glasnevin, where there are also thirty acres of botanic garden; and a year ago the Museum of Irish Industry was reconstructed and opened on a seven years' probation as a Government school of science with a department of agriculture. Our English college, founded six and twenty years since, not by Government, but by working farmers, when a fashion had come up for recognising the new need of scientific training to their business, has not received one farthing of public money. It had to find its own way in the world, and paid so heavily for the experience by which it profits now, that there is a charge to be met of some twelve hundred a year, interest on debt incurred in its young days. For the last twenty years the college has paid this out of its earnings, while providing liberally from the same source for the minds and bodies of its students. Abandoning illusions and endeavours to achieve desirable impossibilities, it has attained a degree of efficiency which brings visitors from France, Spain, Germany, Sweden, and the United States to look into its system. It draws pupils also from distant parts of the old world and of the new. To this condition of a widely recognised efficiency the Farmers' College has attained, and it is working on towards yet higher attainable results. The number of students has, of late years, been steadily rising, and now mounts to seventy, which is within ten of the largest number that can be accommodated in the handsome gothic building set up by the sanguine founders of the institution. In a few years there will not be room for all applicants. A case in its natural history museum shows how greatly the yield of wheat may be improved by the use of picked seed. When there can be a preliminary examination for the picking of the best prepared and aptest minds, and more or less exclusion of the weak and idle, the tillage of brains in the Cirencester College, already so successful, will show finer and more uniform results.

British farming always has been in the front rank of that form of industry. A Book of Husbandry, written more than three centuries ago by one of Henry the Eighth's judges of the Common Pleas, at a time when cultivated herbage and edible roots were unknown in England, is said to contain little that is not permanently true about the cultivation of corn, and clearly to point out errors of practice which have been transmitted from the untaught father to his untaught son, even to this day, in some English districts. Twenty-three years after the printing of that book of Fitzherbert's, husbandry came to honour of verse in Thomas Tusser's Five Hundred Points of Husbandry, a book which indicates many a then recent increase to our agricultural wealth. Hops, introduced early in the century, had become a common

crop; hemp and flax also were common crops; and carrots, cabbages, turnips, and rape, were grown for the kitchen. Clover, and probably also turnips, came to England in the reign of Charles the First, through Sir Richard Weston, who had been ambassador to the Elector Palatine and King of Bohemia, and who wrote a discourse on the husbandry of Brabant and Flanders. In sixteen 'eighty-four we have the first notice of turnips as a food for sheep; but even at the time when George the Third came to the throne, clover and turnips, essential as they are to the modern farming system, were scarcely cultivated by our common farmers in the north. It was at the end of the Stuart time, when we first begin to hear of the sheep eating turnips, that potatoes began to attract attention. Raleigh, who brought the plant from Virginia, had established it in Ireland, thence it had passed into Lancashire, where, at the end of the reign of Charles the Second, we learn "they are very numerous, and now they begin to spread all the kingdom over. They are a pleasant food, boiled or roasted, and eaten with butter and sugar."

Scientific farming may be said to have begun in the first year of the last century, when Mr. Jethro Tull, a Berkshire gentleman, reasoned to himself that plants feed on minute particles of earth taken up by their rootlets, and, therefore, began sowing his crops in rows or drills, so wide apart as to admit of tillage by plough and hoe in the intervals. His purpose was to break up the soil into what he called "pasture" for the roots, and to eradicate the weeds which would steal part of "this terrestrial matter." He formed his land into broad ridges, with two or three rows of his crop upon each, then used horse-hoeing between the ridges and hand-hoeing between the rows. Jethro Tull was a generation ahead of his time, and his book upon Horse-hoeing Husbandry, produced vehement controversy. But in our own day his reputation has come up and ripened. His book appeared in seventeen 'thirty-one, eight years after the formation of our first Agricultural Society—"the. Society of Improvers on the Knowledge of Agriculture in Scotland." The Earl of Stair, one of its most active members, is said to have been the first man who grew turnips in Scotland. He had a turnip head. But this society also was before its time, and lived only for twenty years. Mr. Maxwell, another of its active members, who gave lectures upon agriculture, published at its death a volume of its Select Transactions, and in that volume occurs the first mention of a threshing machine. It was patented, worked by water power, and recommended by the society as enabling one man to do the work of six.

The Royal Dublin Society, founded in 1737, had for one object the encouragement of agriculture. It still holds an annual cattle show, and has of late years established an Order of Associates in Agriculture. Holders of it are entitled to wear blue blossoms of speedwell in their button-holes.

Population increased, commerce and the arts added continually to the wealth and power of the nation, farms were enlarged, and so much new land was brought into use, that whereas before the reign of George the Third the whole number of enclosure bills that had been passed was only two hundred and forty-four, there were passed within that reign more than three thousand. In seventeen 'seventy-seven the Bath and West of England Society, for the encouragement of "Agriculture, Arts, Manufacture, and Commerce," came into existence, and began to hold its meetings. It met to exhibit breeding stock and implements, and offered premiums for reports on subjects affecting agriculture in the West of England. Six years later, that is to say, in seventeen 'eighty-three, the "Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland" was instituted, for the encouragement of Highland Agriculture, Fisheries, and Commerce. This was the year in which the country was relieved of the baneful pressure of the American War. It was the time, also, of Robert Bakewell's fame as an improver of the breeds of sheep and cattle. His improvement upon the long-horned cattle has been superseded by the application of his own principles to the short-horn or Durham breed; but the new race of sheep that he perfected, the Leicesters, still adds to the wealth of the country. The Bakewells of Cirencester go a step farther, and are for the intellectual breeding of an improved race of farmers.

What is called alternate husbandry, alternation of green crops with grain crops, came also in those days into use. In seventeen 'eighty-eight the Swede turnip was accidentally discovered, and soon was in general cultivation. Swing ploughs and threshing machines were no longer rarities. Five years after the discovery of the Swede turnip a "National Board of Agriculture" was established, and remained alive for twenty years, collecting statistical information and drawing up special surveys, documents which would have been more serviceable if they had been less extensive and less expensive. Agriculture next throve upon blood manure in the wars of the French Revolution.

Seventeen 'ninety-five brought us a deficient harvest, and Napoleon's cutting off of our supply of foreign grain. The price of wheat was nearly doubled. Upon this followed the Bank Restriction Act, suspending cash payments, and introducing unlimited speculation upon credit. The high price of wheat stimulated farmers to produce as much of it as possible, by improving arable land, reclaiming wastes, and ploughing up their pastures; the green crop of the new system of alternate husbandry more than compensating for the pasturages thus withdrawn. This lasted for twenty years. Wheat that in the preceding twenty years had sold for less than fifty shillings a quarter, rose till in eighteen hundred and twelve it came to one hundred and twenty-six shillings. The people suffered but the farmers throve, and agriculture made rapid advances. Within that period

of twenty years the rental of land in Scotland advanced from two million to five million and a quarter.

Since that terrible war period there has been rapid and great increase of population asking to be fed, there has been great increase of wealth and great increase of knowledge. Law has struck off fetters with which it had crippled enterprise. The steam engine was first applied to a threshing machine in eighteen hundred and three; there were several machines so worked fifteen or eighteen years later. Steam on the farm, steam on the railway, making transit of stock easy, the marvellous development of mechanical inventions, and a still more marvellous development of the great science of organic chemistry, which has given a true basis to the practice of farming, have secured during the present century the progress of agriculture; although the majority of farmers, scattered over the land in much inevitable isolation from the great collective life of men, have kept pace slowly with the movements of their day.

Sir Humphrey Davy was the first chemist who took a real hold upon the agricultural mind, and this was when, in eighteen 'twelve, he lectured before the Board of Agriculture, and showed that agricultural chemistry had for its study all changes in the arrangements of matter connected with the growth and nourishment of plants; the comparative values of their produce as food; the constituents of soils; the manner in which lands are nourished by manure, or rendered fertile by the different processes of cultivation. But the great stir in this direction began with the publication, in eighteen 'forty, of Baron Liebig's work on Chemistry in its application to Agriculture and Physiology. Liebig's writings obtained a remarkably wide popularity. Everybody concerned in the management of farms was bitten by Liebig, and talked potash and nitrogenous manure. It was the fashion to believe that this great chemist had found the master key to agricultural success. There was a wholesome little mania for agricultural chemistry. The most wonderful immediate results of all kinds were expected from what Liebig called offering a small piece of the philosopher's stone as an oblation to the God of the Dunghill. But when these immediate results didn't follow, the more empty of those who had gone with the crowd turned back. Nevertheless an impulse had been given to true progress in the right direction. In eighteen 'forty-two a body of Mid Lothian tenant farmers started an "Agricultural Chemistry Association," and employed a chemist to conduct experiments for them. Their zeal died out in a few years, but the Highland Agricultural Society kept up the chemical researches. The Agricultural College at Cirencester originated in the same way in the same year 'forty-two. There was not only the Liebig mania in all its freshness and strength, but the tendency to work by association was then strengthening among the farmers as among other bodies of men. The Yorkshire Society had been formed in 'thirty-seven; the Royal Agricultural Society of England, which now has more than five thousand members, and is in close connexion with the Royal Veterinary College, in 'thirty-eight; the Royal Agricultural Improvement Society of Ireland in 'forty-one; the College at Cirencester, as before said, in 'forty-two; and in 'forty-three the chief of the Farmers' Clubs came into life, the Central Farmers' Club, with its headquarters at the York Hotel, Bridge-street, Blackfriars.

It was at a meeting of one of the many local Farmers' Clubs—that of Cirencester and Fairford held in November eighteen 'forty-two—that Mr. Robert Jeffries Brown delivered an address "On the Advantages of a Specific Education for Agricultural Pursuits;" and this was the first move towards the founding of the Cirencester College. When the club met again, at the end of December, its members adopted formally a public address based upon Mr. Brown's views, saying that "we cannot too highly estimate the importance of a specific education for those engaged in agricultural pursuits; and the great value to them of a knowledge of those sciences that are in constant operation in the cultivation of the soil, the growth of crops, and the rearing and feeding of domestic animals; and we think it most essential that the study of these sciences should be united with practical experience. The advantages of an institution of this kind to the landowner, as well as to the occupier, are too obvious to require comment; and we confidently rely on their cordial co-operation and support."

They proceeded accordingly to wait upon landowners and occupiers; upon their own particular great man at Oakley Park, Earl Bathurst, and upon the other chief men of the district. They held meetings also at various market towns. Mr. Brown gave nearly the whole of the next year to the work he had begun. At a public meeting held in Cirencester in April, 'forty-four, it was moved by an earl—the late Earl Ducie—and seconded by a tenant farmer, that an institution ought to be provided in which "The rising generation of farmers may receive instruction at a moderate expense in those sciences a knowledge of which is essential to successful cultivation, and that a farm form part of such institution." Then Lord Bathurst offered a farm of more than four hundred acres for a long term of years, and an adjacent building site for ninety-nine years; a society was formed for the establishment and management of an agricultural college, the interest of noblemen and landowners in distant parts of the kingdom was raised to subscription point, and a proposed capital of twelve thousand pounds was thus obtained. In March, 'forty-five, a charter of incorporation was secured; but as it was now found that twelve thousand pounds would not do all that was expected to be done, it was provided by the deed of settlement that this capital should be doubled. Additional exertions did not quite succeed in doubling it,

but they did bring it up to a few hundreds over twenty thousand pounds. The managers, delivering themselves up to unrestrained enjoyment of a good dabble in—the mud-pie making of our maturer years—bricks and mortar, produced a handsome edifice, with a frontage of nearly two hundred feet, battlemented tower, gable roofs, and lofty gothic windows. Rooms made, of course, to the windows, instead of windows to the rooms, were often spacious only in height. Lofty they must be, because the ceiling is usually looked for somewhere above the top of the window; and the bottom of the window, itself lofty, would be so high above the floor that a student might have to stand on a chair to see the ground outside. There was a dining-hall so high that, without making it a bit too low, a very fine museum has been got by laying a floor midway across it. But on the whole, no doubt, a very durable and handsome college was erected, which by some trouble and thought has, in course of years, become as convenient and comfortable as if the architect himself had been vulgar enough to care for the convenience of its inmates. The architect—several of his craft have done the same within the present century—considerably exceeded his estimates. The managers of the new college were sanguine, and had all their experience to buy; there was no other agricultural college in the country by whose early mistakes they might profit; so they began, like heroes, with an offer of board, lodging, practical and scientific education, all for thirty pounds a year. What could be more desirable than that? "How lovely the intrepid front of youth!" Experience the first showed that while each student paid thirty pounds a year for everything, he cost the college thirty-two for meat and drink alone. That being so, how was the debt on the buildings to be met? How were the teachers to be paid? Out of the profits of the farm? Aye, but that, too, was managed at a loss. There was a bright ideal notion that students should become practically acquainted with every detail of farm work—hoeing, digging, paring turnips, feeding sheep, and so forth; but that if they did field labour they gave service worth wages, and should be credited with wages of their work. Thus it was thought that their industry might pay some part of the cost of their maintenance. And, behold, there was a book kept in which every student was credited with the wages of such work as he did on the farm. Such work! Well. The same bright speculation is to be tried under different and far more hopeful conditions at the new Cornell University in New York.

The plan of the Cornell Institution, which has enrolled our countryman, Mr. Goldwin Smith, among its professors, is partly based upon the good later results obtained at Cirencester. About six years ago Mr. Ezra Cornell, of Ithaca, New York, who had made a large fortune by telegraphy, visited the college at Cirencester with Colonel Johnstone. He afterwards made his offer to the New York government of more than a hundred thousand pounds, in addition to the considerable grant of land from Congress to a state that would provide agricultural teaching, on condition that the whole should go to the founding of a single institution, not as a grant to be divided among several districts. The result is the Cornell University in the State of New York, one department of which is planned upon the model of Cirencester, and forms the only good agricultural college in the United States. There is a large agricultural school at Yale, but it is not very efficient. Mr. Cornell was told at Cirencester of the complete failure there of the system of paying students wages for field labour. Nevertheless he means to try it in America, but not in the same form. The large endowment makes the teaching practically gratuitous in his new university. The farmwork is not required of any as a necessary part of the routine, but it is open to all. Thus it is thought that the poorest father may send an industrious son to this new institution, with the assurance that while he receives intellectual training he may earn enough to pay his moderate expenses, finding also suitable work ready to his hand, and a state of opinion among his fellows trained to recognise it as both useful and honourable. In fact, we are told by newspapers that in this first session of the Cornell University some youths entered three months before the classes opened for the sake of earning two dollars a day through haying and harvest towards their winter expenses. The Cirencester students did not work like men who labour for a living. When the poor student at a Scottish university, who supplies, doubtless, another of Mr. Cornell's models, is proud to earn by work of his hands in leisure time the money spent on cultivation of his intellect, he works nobly, indeed, but under the strong joint pressure of need and ambition. The common labourer works to feed himself and his wife and children; but the young student whose actual wants are paid for by his father's cheque, and who goes out with a troop of light-hearted young fellows in his own position to play at field labour in the name of education, and to have his earnings put down to his father's credit, is the most unprofitable of all known sorts of farm servant. He turns work into play, smokes under hedges, and even when he does get through a certain quantity of work, is not to be relied upon for doing it at the right time, or thoroughly. When the business of the college farm required that certain work should be completed in a certain field by a particular day, the chance would be that it was not done, or done badly, if it was entrusted to the students. To the students of that day: we speak of times completely gone, of difficulties conquered, partly by abandonment of efforts in a wrong direction; but the results of the first years of work in the Agricultural College at Cirencester were disappointing. In the year 'forty-eight the managers found that they had overdrawn their account at the bank to the extent of about ten

thousand pounds. They were working college and farm at a loss, and had not much to say for the results produced. Even the art of managing the hearty, free-spirited farmers' sons, accustomed to much outdoor sport and little study, who then came to the college, had yet to be learnt. One day a rat was brought to the lecture room of an unpopular professor, let loose in lecture time with a sudden slamming of every desk, hunted, killed, and thrown in the professor's face.

Then there was the very troublesome fact of the overdrawn ten thousand. The promoters met to consider whether the college was to be closed as a failure. The result of discussion was that the work of the place lay before it, not the less clear for its early errors and shortcomings. Earl Ducie, Earl Bathurst, Mr. Sotheron Estcourt, and Mr. Edward Holland, who had first offered himself to bear the whole responsibility, became, with Mr. Langston, answerable for all the college debts, and by right of this responsibility, they took upon themselves its management. Upon their personal security upwards of thirty thousand pounds were added to the original subscriptions and donations. These gentlemen now constitute the Council of the College, and under their supervision it has become what it now is, not yet the best conceivable thing of its kind, but the best and most successful agricultural college that has yet been founded anywhere.

It stands about a mile out of Cirencester, facing Oakley Park, whose beautiful woods were so familiar to Pope that in his later years he wrote thence to Martha Blount, "You cannot think how melancholy this place makes me. Every part of this wood puts into my mind poor Mr. Gay, with whom I passed once a great deal of pleasant time in it, and another friend, who is near dead, and quite lost to us, Dr. Swift." And he said that he felt in it "the same sort of uneasiness as I find at Twickenham whenever I pass my mother's room." Alas that Pope's melancholy should be perpetuated, for there is talk of placing a new cemetery midway between the town and the college, a cheerful addition to what now is an agreeable promenade. So planted, on high and healthy ground, six hundred feet above the sea level, and with no buildings but its own in sight, the college is as pleasant a place of residence as any one could wish who takes delight in English country air and scenery. The Farmers' College is as rural in all its surroundings as the farmer's occupation. Its massive and roomy farm buildings are a quarter of a mile distant from it. They include a fixed engine of ten-horse power, which works a threshing-mill, a pair of stones for bruising or grinding, the chaff and root cutters, and also the pumps. There are the feeding-boxes and cow-house, the chaff and root house, where all material is prepared for the stock, which is lodged close by in yards, and sheds, and styes. The cart-stable is so divided that each animal can move about at pleasure, and be fed at the head. An opposite line of buildings includes the slaughterhouse, tool and artificial manure-house, office, and blacksmiths' and carpenters' shops, in which useful lessons may be taken by those students who are about to emigrate. Under the roofs of these buildings are shed-room, straw and hay lofts, and granary. Add to all these a roomy rickyard and the residences of the bailiff and tenant, an old student of the college, who took honours there in his time, is thoroughly interested in the college work, and goes through his business with all his methods of proceeding open to the daily observation of the students. This gentleman cultivates the five hundred acres on his own account. Farm management by the collective understanding of a body corporate could scarcely pay. By a turnpike road that intersects the farm is another of the outlying buildings, the Veterinary Hospital, under the management of the veterinary professor. The college is obliged usually to buy instructive cases of disease. Farmers are more ready to kill cattle when they begin to sicken than to incur doctor's bills of, say, a couple of pounds apiece on their account; and if they have a sick horse they don't take very well to the notion of its being argued over in clinical lectures before sixty or seventy students. They have a mistaken dread, too, of the humour for experiment in scientific men, and fear lest, when they send a horse to be cured,

> Dread feats shall follow, and disasters great,
> Pills charge on pills, and bolus bolus meet.

Still cases do come in the natural way for the safest and best treatment to be had in that part of the country, and the deficiency is made up by a discreet purchase of diseased beasts.

As to the farm, of its five hundred acres, forty acres are in pasture, the rest arable. The soil, which belongs to the Bath oolitic formation, is composed of clays, marls, limestones, and inferior brash, the last named and least valuable form of soil predominating. But the variations are so frequent that in a furrow of ten chains in length the plough will often pass through soil alternating from brash to rich loam, or it may be to a cold tenacious clay. There are twenty fields, varying in size from ten to fifty acres; two thirds of the land is handy to the farm buildings, the rest scattered, difficult of access, and with an irregular surface, costly therefore to cultivate. These differences of condition, which might vex a farmer who looked only to money profit from the land, are full of interest and information for the student who is well taught to observe.

The flock on the farm comprises two hundred and fifty breeding ewes, pure Cotswold; there are twelve milch cows, for the supply of college milk; nine carefully selected horses of the Clydesdale, Suffolk, and West Country breeds, and pigs, pure Berkshire. These are winning honours as prize takers. They have among them now, as far as prizes can bear witness to such a fact, the first pig of the

nation. He was the second; but the first is killed and cured, so that he is now without known rival as the great Lord Bacon of the day.

We paid a visit to this college a few weeks after the opening of its present session, went through it, dined with the students, and took a lesson with them in the laboratory upon a subject not, we believe, generally popular with the townspeople of Cirencester, water. Our visit was paid on the monthly live-stock market day, perhaps the best of its kind, as to quantity and value of stock, in the West of England. There we found, on one of the hottest baking days of this memorable baking year, in a newly constructed market, some three thousand sheep and oxen unprovided with a drop of water. Provision for water supply not only had formed no part of the architect's arrangement of the market, but seemed to have been disdained as low art. Cirencester itself is content with water from the same bed into which its drainage flows, though an ample supply of good water from the fuller's earth below, is pumped close by, for a canal, and at the service of the town if it will have it. But it won't. When men themselves are content with a little bad water, no wonder that beasts are believed not to require any. While the unfortunate animals in the Cirencester live-stock market were panting in the sun, a stream of clear water, the overflow of a lake in the adjacent park, was running along a pipe but a few feet under the surface of the market ground. Somebody had suggested that it would cost little to tap that pipe and put a pump over it. A stone tank had actually been given to receive the water so obtained. But no pump has been placed over the waste water pipe, and we saw close to a flock of thirsty sheep the stone tank contemptuously turned bottom upwards, dry in the dust under a sultry sun. After their day of thirst in the live-stock market, there is no road out of Cirencester that would bring those parched animals to a drinking place within a distance of some miles. A benevolent quaker in the town, merciful to other men's beasts, has done what he could to mitigate this evil by setting up a tank at his own door.

But the Agricultural College has wells of its own, and we heard nothing about the town water from its chemical professor. Remote from great cities, the professors of this college must be resident within its walls, and the ample building accordingly supplies rooms to a professor of chemistry and to his assistant; to professors of agriculture, of natural history, and of anatomy, physiology and hygiene, as well as a teacher of drawing, who is a certificated master from South Kensington. The professorship of mathematics and surveying is held by the principal, whose house, once alone on the farm, with walls built as if to stand a cannonade, is the only old part of the building. We found the students very much at home during the quarter of an hour—which did not seem a bad one—before dinner. Each has his own cell, and was hived in it, or buzzing in upon a friend, or joining a small swarm in the library, a comfortable room freely supplied with books of reference and journals. The dinner in hall was plentiful and pleasant, as an English college dinner ought to be, and has a common English feature that will not be copied in the Cornell University, in its brew of college beer. In the United States beer is not given in any place of education, and it is said that no college authority would venture to introduce it. But might not the man be less ready to "liquor up" if the boy had formed wholesome acquaintance with John Barleycorn?

After dinner there were the museums to look at. Each professor lectures once a week in the museum itself on the specimens illustrating his subject. A museum, all alive and growing, is to be seen out of doors in the well-stocked botanical garden, with beds set apart for experimenting. The museums are remarkably well furnished with what is necessary for the illustration of the lectures. There is a herbarium containing three thousand specimens of British plants; there is a good series to illustrate geology and mineralogy, with many striking illustrations of the effect of soil or selection of seed upon produce. There is a fine set of wax models of every form of cultivated roots; there are samples of the seed of every plant used in English agriculture, and specimen plants of many varieties of important cereals. The excellent chemical collection also tells its facts to the eye in a striking manner. Thus, one case contains a series of articles of food produced by the farmer, separated into their constituents. Side by side the student sees in substantial bulk the relative proportions of water and of flesh and fat or heat-producing elements, in wheat, barley, oats, peas, beans, and so forth. The percentage of water thus put for substantial comparison before the eye, looks very striking. A veteran, long past the pulpy time of youth, who gave up in his manhood wine for water, impressed by the fact here shown, has, in his age, left off drinking altogether, on the plea that his bread, meat, and vegetables contain quite as much water as he wants. Another fact that catches the eye immediately concerns another veteran, whom it will not be improper to name, Jack Sprat. Of this person it is said constantly that he could eat no fat. That is a popular delusion. For here is a mass showing how much fat there is in the lean of meat. Jack Sprat may have been himself under a delusion, but the truth is that neither he nor anybody else can eat the lean and not eat fat.

But, like the Cirencester market builders, we are forgetting the water. It so happened that on the day of our visit to the college the chemistry of water had been the subject of the chemistry professor's morning lecture, and the custom of the college is for the students to work out for themselves after dinner practically in the laboratory, what they had been taught theoretically in the lecture-room. This is the soundest way of teaching, but not always possible. At

the Agricultural College, a spacious airy laboratory, for elementary study, with a laboratory for advanced analyses and a professor's room, have been constructed out of an old barn. It has been thoroughly fitted up, each student has plenty of room for his own operations, and probably there is no place of education in the kingdom with a laboratory more convenient for its pupils, or for the professional analyses made by its chiefs. The work of the day was the analysis of water for organic matter, lime, and so forth. The different ways of testing could be copied into note books from a writing on the wall; the meaning of them was briefly and clearly told by the professor, and all requisite practical directions were at the same time given. Then the students set to work for themselves with their evaporating pans, their retorts and reagents, taking counsel of their teacher whereever they met with any difficulty.

So, too, the professor of natural history works at fit time with his students in the open country, and there is, by-the-by, a curious want of uniformity in the surface formation of the country about Cirencester, which makes this region a very convenient one for the out-door study of geology. The professor of agriculture takes his students about the farm. The veterinary professor has his hospital, and a capital series of casts showing the teeth of animals at different ages, preparations of diseased structure, and other delicacies. The principal, who is also professor of mathematics and surveying, goes abroad among his students with chain and theodolite. When a tree is felled in the park he teaches them to estimate the value of its timber. They apply under his direction mathematics to the measuring of haystacks, and at the annual valuation of the farm there is a prize for the valuation by a student which comes nearest to that made professionally.

Great attention is paid to the study of the true values of farm work and produce. At once, upon entering, each student begins farm bookkeeping, and has punctually to post up the details of the college farm. In the second year this book-keeping takes a higher form, and becomes a scientific study. A book is given to the student showing among other things the size of every field, the successive crops it has grown, and a minute analysis of the soil. Blank leaves following the description of each field, are then to be filled up with a minute analysis of the form of work done on it, the number of hands, horses, time and money spent upon each detail of its cultivation, and a mathematical reference of each element in farm work to a fixed standard of value. There is so much to be learnt every day, and such strict testing of the amount learnt by weekly examinations—of which every student sees the result in a list of marks showing him how far he has failed or succeeded in his studies—that a short time at the Farm and College cannot be spent unprofitably by any one who thinks of coaxing bread and meat out of his mother earth.

Now here is the difficulty. Agriculture rightly studied has become one of the liberal professions. At a dinner of the Royal Agricultural Society at Chester, Mr. Gladstone hardly exaggerated its real dignity when he spoke of it as an art "which of all others, perhaps, affords the most varied scope, and the largest sphere of development to the powers of the human mind." But it is not yet so taken by many; perhaps not by many even among the students of Cirencester. It combines, like medicine, practice with science, and for its right pursuit requires a preparation not many degrees less thorough. A volume called Practice with Science contains some lectures which have been given at Cirencester College. One is by the principal, upon Agricultural Education; and in this he combats the notion of the Royal Agricultural Society, that a well-educated farmer means a man who has learned Latin and Greek, and the notion of a member of the Central Farmers' Club, who argued that the college had placed the standard of qualification for its diploma too high, and that a two years' course of study was too long. "All that was necessary," said this objector, "was a sound knowledge of the principles of mathematics, chemistry, geology, botany, and veterinary surgery!" As if it did not cost a good part of a life to get a "sound knowledge" of any one of those little amusements. Still the notion that one may gather the fruits of study without climbing the tree is very common; and although the number of the Cirencester students who go steadily through the prescribed course and fairly earn the college diploma is increasing, it bears no proportion to the numbers that have come and gone every year, and to the pains taken to secure system and thoroughness in the machinery of education. The cost of this education is not more than has been found requisite to meet its unavoidable expenses. A farm cannot safely be undertaken with less capital than about eight pounds an acre, and a well cultivated brain is, as we said at starting, the best part of a farmer's estate, besides being (in this country) all of it freehold; yet the cost of acquiring it bears only a small proportion to the other costs of a safe start in English farming life. The English farmer cannot rise to the full height of the position made for him by the growth of science, until he receives a sound school training, valid in every part, and follows it up with a thorough training for his business. He should read and speak, not Greek and Latin, but two living languages besides his own, that he may be able to converse freely with farmers from abroad, and profit by their treatises and journals. But of the time taken from Latin and Greek the greater part should be spent in a particular cultivation of arithmetic and mathematics, and of the first principles of natural science. Then let him, at the age of sixteen, pass from school to the farm, and for the next year see and share in the work done upon it. So prepared let him go to the Cirencester College and work firmly through the two years' course. If he spend his time well he will

learn enough for his purpose, although even after he has taken his diploma he will feel that the two years' curriculum was all too short. His age now will be nineteen. Armed with exact scientific knowledge, which he has been taught how to apply to every detail of agriculture, let him proceed to work and watch for himself, during the next two years, on any large well managed farm, taking a salary, perhaps, for the assistance he can give. At the end of that term he has reached the age of one and twenty. It is his own fault then if he be not in his own profession, what his cousin who goes every October to his London hospital will hardly be till a couple of years later in life, a duly qualified practitioner. Their day may be long coming, but of some such sort must be the English farmers of a day to come.

DUTY.

If thou hast Yesterday thy duty done,
And thereby clear'd firm footing for To-day,
Whatever clouds make dark To-morrow's sun,
Thou shalt not miss thy solitary way.

THE RUFFIAN.

BY THE UNCOMMERCIAL TRAVELLER.

I ENTERTAIN so strong an objection to the euphonious softening of Ruffian into Rough, which has lately become popular, that I restore the right word to the heading of this paper; the rather, as my object is to dwell upon the fact that the Ruffian is tolerated among us to an extent that goes beyond all unruffianly endurance. I take the liberty to believe that if the Ruffian besets my life, a professional Ruffian at large in the open streets of a great city, notoriously having no other calling than that of Ruffian, and of disquieting and despoiling me as I go peacefully about my lawful business, interfering with no one, then the Government under which I have the great constitutional privilege, supreme honour and happiness, and all the rest of it, to exist, breaks down in the discharge of any Government's most simple elementary duty.

What did I read in the London daily papers, in the early days of this last September? That the Police had "AT LENGTH SUCCEEDED IN CAPTURING TWO OF THE NOTORIOUS GANG THAT HAVE SO LONG INFESTED THE WATERLOO-ROAD." Is it possible? What a wonderful Police! Here is a straight, broad, public thoroughfare of immense resort; half a mile long; gas-lighted by night; with a great gas-lighted railway station in it, extra the street lamps; full of shops; traversed by two popular cross thoroughfares of considerable traffic; itself the main road to the South of London; and the admirable Police have, after long infestment of this dark and lonely spot by a gang of Ruffians, actually got hold of two of them. Why, can it be doubted that any man of fair London knowledge and common resolution, armed with the powers of the Law, could have captured the whole confederacy in a week?

It is to the saving up of the Ruffian class by the Magistracy and Police—to the conventional preserving of them, as if they were Partridges—that their number and audacity must be in great part referred. Why is a notorious Thief and Ruffian ever left at large? He never turns his liberty to any account but violence and plunder, he never did a day's work out of jail, he never will do a day's work out of jail. As a proved notorious Thief he is always consignable to prison for three months. When he comes out, he is surely as notorious a Thief as he was when he went in. Then send him back again. "Just Heaven!" cries the Society for the protection of remonstrant Ruffians, "This is equivalent to a sentence of perpetual imprisonment!" Precisely for that reason it has my advocacy. I demand to have the Ruffian kept out of my way, and out of the way of all decent people. I demand to have the Ruffian employed, perforce, in hewing wood and drawing water somewhere for the general service, instead of hewing at her Majesty's subjects and drawing their watches out of their pockets. If this be termed an unreasonable demand, then the tax-gatherer's demand on me must be far more unreasonable, and cannot be otherwise than extortionate and unjust.

It will be seen that I treat of the Thief and Ruffian as one. I do so, because I know the two characters to be one, in the vast majority of cases, just as well as the Police know it. (As to the Magistracy, with a few exceptions, they know nothing about it but what the Police choose to tell them.) There are disorderly classes of men who are not thieves; as railway-navigators, brickmakers, wood-sawyers, costermongers. These classes are often disorderly and troublesome; but it is mostly among themselves, and at any rate they have their industrious avocations, they work early and late, and work hard. The generic Ruffian—honourable member for what is tenderly called the Rough Element—is either a Thief, or the companion of Thieves. When he infamously molests women coming out of chapel on Sunday evenings (for which I would have his back scarified often and deep) it is not only for the gratification of his pleasant instincts, but that there may be a confusion raised by which either he or his friends may profit, in the commission of highway robberies or in picking pockets. When he gets a police-constable down and kicks him helpless for life, it is because that constable once did his duty in bringing him to justice. When he rushes into the bar of a public-house and scoops an eye out of one of the company there, or bites his ear off, it is because the man he maims gave evidence against him. When he and a line of comrades extending across the footway—say of that solitary mountain-spur of the Abruzzi, the Waterloo Road—advance towards me, "skylarking" among themselves, my purse or shirt pin is in predestined peril from his playfulness. Always a Ruffian, always a Thief. Always a Thief, always a Ruffian.

Now, when I, who am not paid to know these

things, know them daily on the evidence of my senses and experience; when I know that the Ruffian never jostles a lady in the street, or knocks a hat off, but in order that the Thief may profit, is it surprising that I should require from those who *are* paid to know these things, prevention of them?

Look at this group at a street corner. Number one is a shirking fellow of five-and-twenty, in an ill-favoured and ill-savoured suit, his trousers of corduroy, his coat of some indiscernible ground-work for the deposition of grease, his neckerchief like an eel, his complexion like dirty dough, his mangy fur cap pulled low upon his beetle brows to hide the prison cut of his hair. His hands are in his pockets. He puts them there when they are idle, as naturally as in other people's pockets when they are busy, for he knows that they are not roughened by work, and that they tell a tale. Hence, whenever he takes one out to draw a sleeve across his nose—which is often, for he has weak eyes and a constitutional cold in his head—he restores it to its pocket immediately afterwards. Number two is a burly brute of five-and-thirty, in a tall stiff hat; is a composite as to his clothes of betting man and fighting man; is whiskered; has a staring pin in his breast, along with his right hand; has insolent and cruel eyes; large shoulders; strong legs, booted and tipped for kicking. Number three is forty years of age; is short, thick-set, strong, and bow-legged; wears knee cords and white stockings, a very long-sleeved waistcoat, a very large neckerchief doubled or trebled round his throat, and a crumpled white hat crowns his ghastly parchment face. This fellow looks like an executed postboy of other days, cut down from the gallows too soon, and restored and preserved by express diabolical agency. Numbers five, six, and seven, are hulking, idle, slouching young men, patched and shabby, too short in the sleeves and too tight in the legs, slimily clothed, foul-spoken, repulsive wretches inside and out. In all the party there obtains a certain twitching character of mouth and furtiveness of eye, that hints how the coward is lurking under the bully. The hint is quite correct, for they are a slinking sneaking set, far more prone to lie down on their backs and kick out, when in difficulty, than to make a stand for it. (This may account for the street mud on the backs of Numbers five, six, and seven, being much fresher than the stale splashes on their legs.)

These engaging gentry a Police-constable stands contemplating. His Station, with a Reserve of assistance, is very near at hand. They cannot pretend to any trade, not even to be porters or messengers. It would be idle if they did, for he knows them, and they know that he knows them, to be nothing but professed Thieves and Ruffians. He knows where they resort, knows by what slang names they call one another, knows how often they have been in prison, and how long, and for what. All this is known at his Station, too, and is (or ought to be) known at Scotland Yard, too. But does he know, or does his Station know, or does Scotland Yard know, or does anybody know, why these fellows should be here at liberty, when, as reputed Thieves to whom a whole Division of Police could swear, they might all be under lock and key at hard labour? Not he; truly he would be a wise man if he did! He only knows that these are members of the "notorious gang," which, according to the newspaper Police-office reports of this last past September, "have so long infested" the awful solitudes of the Waterloo Road, and out of which almost impregnable fastnesses the Police have at length dragged Two, to the unspeakable admiration of all good civilians.

The consequences of this contemplative habit on the part of the Executive—a habit to be looked for in a hermit, but not in a Police System—are familiar to us all. The Ruffian becomes one of the established orders of the body politic. Under the playful name of Rough (as if he were merely a practical joker) his movements and successes are recorded on public occasions. Whether he mustered in large numbers, or small; whether he was in good spirits, or depressed; whether he turned his generous exertions to very prosperous account, or Fortune was against him; whether he was in a sanguinary mood, or robbed with amiable horse play and a gracious consideration for life and limb; all this is chronicled as if he were an Institution. Is there any city in Europe, out of England, in which these terms are held with the pests of Society? Or in which, at this day, such violent robberies from the person are constantly committed as in London?

The Preparatory Schools of Ruffianism are similarly borne with. The young Ruffians of London—not Thieves yet, but training for scholarships and fellowships in the Criminal Court Universities—molest quiet people and their property, to an extent that is hardly credible. The throwing of stones in the streets has become a dangerous and destructive offence, which surely could have got to no greater height though we had had no Police but our own riding-whips and walking-sticks—the Police to which I myself appeal on these occasions. The throwing of stones at the windows of railway carriages in motion—an act of wanton wickedness with the very Arch-Fiend's hand in it—had become a crying evil, when the railway companies forced it on Police notice. Constabular contemplation had until then been the order of the day.

Within these twelve months, there arose among the young gentlemen of London aspiring to Ruffianism, and cultivating that much encouraged social art, a facetious cry of "I'll have this!" accompanied with a clutch at some article of a passing lady's dress. I have known a lady's veil to be thus humourously torn from her face and carried off in the open streets at noon; and I have had the honour of myself giving chase, on Westminster Bridge, to another

young Ruffian, who, in full daylight early on a summer evening, had nearly thrown a modest young woman into a swoon of indignation and confusion, by his shameful manner of attacking her with this cry as she harmlessly passed along before me. Mr. Carlyle, some time since, awakened a little pleasantry by writing of his own experience of the Ruffian of the streets. I have seen the Ruffian act, in exact accordance with Mr. Carlyle's description, innumerable times, and I never saw him checked.

The blaring use of the very worst language possible, in our public thoroughfares—especially in those set apart for recreation—is another disgrace to us, and another result of constabular contemplation, the like of which I have never heard in any other country to which my uncommercial travels have extended. Years ago, when I had a near interest in certain children who were sent with their nurses, for air and exercise, into the Regent's Park, I found this evil to be so abhorrent and horrible there, that I called public attention to it, and also to its contemplative reception by the Police. Looking afterwards into the newest Police Act, and finding that the offence was punishable under it, I resolved, when striking occasion should arise, to try my hand as prosecutor. The occasion arose soon enough, and I ran the following gauntlet.

The utterer of the base coin in question, was a girl of seventeen or eighteen, who, with a suitable attendance of blackguards, youths and boys, was flaunting along the streets, returning from an Irish funeral, in a Progress interspersed with singing and dancing. She had turned round to me and expressed herself in the most audible manner, to the great delight of that select circle. I attended the party, on the opposite side of the way, for a mile further, and then encountered a Police constable. The party had made themselves merry at my expense until now, but seeing me speak to the constable, its male members instantly took to their heels, leaving the girl alone. I asked the constable did he know my name? Yes, he did. "Take that girl into custody, on my charge, for using bad language in the streets." He had never heard of such a charge. I had. Would he take my word that he should get into no trouble? Yes, sir, he would do that. So he took the girl, and I went home for my Police Act.

With this potent instrument in my pocket, I literally as well as figuratively, "returned to the charge," and presented myself at the Police Station of the district. There, I found on duty a very intelligent Inspector (they are all intelligent men), who, likewise, had never heard of such a charge. I showed him my clause, and we went over it together twice or thrice. It was plain, and I engaged to wait upon the suburban Magistrate to-morrow morning at ten o'clock.

In the morning, I put my Police Act in my pocket again, and waited on the suburban Magistrate. I was not quite so courteously received by him as I should have been by The Lord Chancellor or The Lord Chief Justice, but that was a question of good breeding on the suburban Magistrate's part, and I had my clause ready with its leaf turned down. Which was enough for *me*.

Conference took place between the Magistrate and clerk, respecting the charge. During conference I was evidently regarded as a much more objectionable person than the prisoner;—one giving trouble by coming there voluntarily, which the prisoner could not be accused of doing. The prisoner had been got up, since I last had the pleasure of seeing her, with a great effect of white apron and straw bonnet. She reminded me of an elder sister of Red Riding Hood, and I seemed to remind the sympathising Chimney Sweep by whom she was attended, of the Wolf.

The Magistrate was doubtful, Mr. Uncommercial Traveller, whether this charge could be entertained. It was not known. Mr. Uncommercial Traveller replied that he wished it were better known, and that, if he could afford the leisure, he would use his endeavours to make it so. There was no question about it, however, he contended. Here was the clause.

The clause was handed in, and more conference resulted. After which I was asked the extraordinary question: "Mr. Uncommercial, do you really wish this girl to be sent to prison?" To which I grimly answered, staring: "If I didn't, why should I take the trouble to come here?" Finally, I was sworn, and gave my agreeable evidence in detail, and White Riding Hood was fined ten shillings, under the clause, or sent to prison for so many days. "Why, Lord bless you, Sir," said the Police-officer, who showed me out, with a great enjoyment of the jest of her having been got up so effectively, and caused so much hesitation: "If she goes to prison, that will be nothing new to *her*. She comes from Charles-street, Drury-lane!"

The Police, all things considered, are an excellent force, and I have borne my small testimony to their merits. Constabular contemplation is the result of a bad system; a system which is administered, not invented, by the man in constable's uniform, employed at twenty shillings a week. He has his orders, and would be marked for discouragement if he over-stepped them. That the system is bad, there needs no lengthened argument to prove, because the fact is self-evident. If it were anything else, the results that have attended it, could not possibly have come to pass. Who will say that under a good system, our streets could have got into their present state?

The objection to the whole Police system, as concerning the Ruffian, may be stated, and its failure exemplified, as follows. It is well known that on all great occasions, when they come together in numbers, the mass of the English people are their own trustworthy Police. It is well known that wheresoever there is collected together any fair general representation of the people, a respect for law

and order, and a determination to discountenance lawlessness and disorder, may be relied upon. As to one another, the people are a very good Police, and yet are quite willing in their good nature that the stipendiary Police should have the credit of the people's moderation. But we are all of us powerless against the Ruffian, because we submit to the law, and it is his only trade, by superior force and by violence, to defy it. Moreover, we are constantly admonished from high places (like so many Sunday-school children out for a holiday of buns and milk-and-water) that we are not to take the law into our own hands, but are to hand our defence over to it. It is clear that the common enemy to be punished and exterminated first of all, is the Ruffian. It is clear that he is, of all others, *the* offender for whose repressal we maintain a costly system of Police. Him, therefore, we expressly present to the Police to deal with, conscious that, on the whole, we can, and do, deal reasonably well with one another. Him the Police deal with so inefficiently and absurdly that he flourishes, and multiplies, and, with all his evil deeds upon his head as notoriously as his hat is, pervades the streets with no more let or hindrance than ourselves.

LEAVES FROM THE MAHOGANY TREE.

THE GLORIOUS VINTAGE OF CHAMPAGNE!

A FEW years ago, a certain German painter of "still life" acquired a reputation by his skill in depicting long taper glasses newly filled with sparkling wine. It was of a delicious golden straw colour, and through it rose a swift little sparkling fountain of bright beady bubbles, rushing upward like a swarm of fairies. There they were, ever gushing up to the creaming surface, yet fixed on the instant while darting aloft by the magic skill of the Rhenish painter. It was as good as having a glass of Sillery, to look at that picture; two looks and a biscuit should have been enough for any reasonable person's lunch. The rector of the University of Beauvais, whom the merchants of Rheims crowned with laurel as a proof of their gratitude, sang of champagne as

CUPID'S GIFT.

The laughing wine unprison,
The wine with the daybreak's gleam,
The wine that sparkles and dances
With a fountain's gushing stream;
The wine that chases sorrow
From the heart of toil and woe;
'Twas Cupid's gift to Psyche
In the ages long ago.

Hark to the soft susurrus,
'Tis the sound of the summer tide,
When waves melt all to music
On golden shores, sun dyed.
'Tis love's own sweet elixir,
Stolen from Jove, we know,
To fairest Psyche given
In the ages long ago.

The wine in Champagne planted
Was the gift of the laughing god;
Its matchless power and savour
Came from no earthly clod.
'Tis a spell to banish sadness,
The best the wise men know;
Bright Cupid's gift to Psyche
In the ages long ago.

Slightly flat, rather wanting in body, a little too classical, and with as much no meaning as ever song had; but still pretty well for a doctor of Beauvais University, with the unfortunate name of Coffin. And, considering that it was penned in the reign of Louis the Fourteenth by an old doctor of civil law, who knew more of Justinian, we warrant, than of Ovid's Art of Love, it may perhaps pass muster.

The wine of Epernay and Hautvilliers was drunk freely through the helmet barred, before the fifteenth century. The knights who rode beside Joan of Arc, and who played at cards with Charles the Simple, had quaffed Champagne, and not without approval. In the fifteenth century, the wine of Ay met with approval. Not very long after the public approval, the kings of Europe entered the vineyards of Champagne and appropriated and sealed up all the casks they could lay their royal hands on. They knew what was good, but they could not keep the secret.

"In 1328, Rheims wine," says Mr. Cyrus Redding, who knows France well, and has written much on the French wine trade, "Rheims wine (Champagne) fetched ten livres only, while Beaune fetched twenty-eight." In 1559 people had become more educated. The Reformation had opened people's eyes. Champagne was then dearer than average Burgundy. In 1561, public enlightenment went on. Champagne rose as the world advanced. In 1571, Champagne was eight times its original value; so we must presume that all this time the cultivation of the Champagne wine was improving, and the art of pressing the grape improving too.

Champagne was much appreciated by Mr. Froude's fat friend, Henry the Eighth; he and Francis the First, equally admired it. Leo the Tenth, drank papally of it; nor did long-headed Charles the Fifth (rather a gourmand, even in his last moments, as Mr. Stirling has shown) neglect the most delicious secret of Bacchus. Wise potentates! They had, each of them, a commissioner at Ay: four men who spent their lives in watching the grapes.

In the year 1397, Wenceslaus, King of Bohemia, came to France under pretence of negotiating a treaty with Charles the Sixth. He reached the fatal city of Rheims, famous for its cathedral — and its Champagne. The great Bohemian drank, and got drunk. He drank again, and got drunk again. To quote the old negro's excuse, "the same old drink" held him day after day. He never got sober any more; he remained soaked in Champagne, forgot all about Bohemia, all about the treaty, all about Charles the Sixth and the disputed claims, all about everything, but drank until he saw a bill

that sobered him and terrified him into departure.

In the year 1610, Champagne met with great approval (especially as the wine was given away—some people, like Sheridan, can take any *given* quantity) at the coronation of Louis the Thirteenth. Thenceforth it became the king, or the queen, of French wines. Champagne was crowned with Louis the Thirteenth, and of the two, Champagne made the better monarch.

In the history of all success there is a period when malice, jealousy, and rivalry stand at bay, and bear down on their enemy for a last determined struggle. Champagne had to bear this final charge of the imperial guard of envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness. The French doctors of medicine began, in 1652, a discussion on the sanatory and injurious effects of Champagne, which never ended until 1778. Doctors were born, grew up, and died, and so did their patients; and still, while the world let the corks fly gaily, reckless of all consequences, the inexhaustible doctors went on shaking their periwigged heads, doubtful, very doubtful, whether Champagne did or did not injure the nerves and produce gout. At last a verdict was pronounced. Æsculapius adopted the wine, and branded it as safe thenceforth for ever. It has been brandied since by non-Æsculapians, but it has not become the safer for that. Then broke out its eulogists into a flood of praise. Venner declared that it excelled all wines, and ought to be reserved for himself and the peers and princes of France. Beaudius even declared it "vinum Dei."

We all know a glass of good dry Champagne. It is indeed what Dr. Druitt sensibly calls "a true stimulant to mind and body, rapid, volatile, transitory, and harmless." It should be firm and clear, says the doctor, with high grapy bouquet and flavour, which survives the charming tide of effervescence. It should be lighter and sweeter than dry Sillery, and should have a slight pineapple aroma. It should slightly cream on the surface, not froth; and should send up bright, clear, sparkling bubbles of carbonic acid gas. The inimitable aroma should leave an agreeable memory on the palate.—In fact, it should be as unlike what you generally get, as possible.

The Champagne vine grows in the departments of the Ardennes, the Marne, the Aube, and the Haute Marne. The best wine comes from the Marne—"the vineyards of the river," as they are called. This district the vine-growers divide into four divisions—the river, the mountain of Rheims, the estate of St. Thierry, and the valleys of Norrois and Tardenois.

In the first-class of champagne stands Sillery, pale amber, with dry taste, rich body, and fine bouquet. The best is the Vin du Roi, grown in the vineyards of Verzenay and Mailly, which stud the north-eastern slopes of a chain of hills that separate the Marne from the Vesle. These vineyards formerly belonged to the Marquis de Sillery, who has thus delightfully immortalised his name. The wine was long known as the wine de la Marechale, from the Marechale d'Estrées, who watched over its careful manufacture; but the marquis has long since ungallantly expelled the memory of la Marechale. Sillery is allowed to be the most spirituous and choice, besides being the strongest, most durable, and most wholesome, of the Champagne wines. It is unquestionably the highest manifestation of the divinity of Bacchus in all France. Ay scatters its vines down a calcareous declivity, open to the south, and casting green shadows of its clustering leaves on the waters of the Marne. The district extends from Bisseuil to the borders of the department of Aisne. The still and creaming Ay wines when made well, and in a good year, are supreme. The still, as usual with this class of wines, is the best. They are consumed in Paris and London, but not in America. Mareuil comes next, and Pierry, which produces a drier wine that keeps better than Ay. A slightly flinty taste marks Pierry. Then follow Dizy and Epernay, which are sometimes equal, sometimes inferior to, Ay. The "Closet" wines of Epernay hold their own with those of Ay.

The second-class Champagnes comprise those of Hautvilliers (nine miles from Rheims); these Champagnes formerly ranked high, but have now degenerated, or are less carefully made. Then come the wines of Cramant, Avize, Oger, and Ménil, all near Epernay, and all made of white grapes, which are much used to give stability to the wines of Ay.

In the third-class come lesser sorts, Chouilly, Monthelon, Grauve, Mancy, and other vineyards near Rheims. The first two classes are bearable, the rest have no body unless mixed.

The effervescing wines are seldom mixed. None of the white wines can be mixed except with the growth of neighbouring districts, but with the red they do anything. The best of the red is the Clos, or St. Thierry, which has a Burgundy and Champagne quality blended. The mountain wines (little known in England), Verzy, Verzenay, and Mailly, are of good quality. Bouzy has a particularly delicate flavour, and Mont-Sougeon will keep well for forty years.

The grey wine is obtained by treading the grapes for a quarter of an hour before they go to press. For the pink they tread still longer, but the rose coloured Rheims wines (always inferior) are made by a tinge of very strong red wine, or by cream of tartar, and a liquor of elder-berries manufactured at Fromes.

The best red wines are fit to use, the second year, but they will keep well for six or seven. The ordinary Champagnes are in perfection the third year of bottling. The best wines gain in delicacy for from ten to twenty years, and are often found good even at thirty and forty.

Good Champagne did not drop from the clouds nor flow from the rocks. It was produced by hard labour, patient skill, and deep observation. In the first place, the Champagne soil is special,

and cannot be imitated. The favoured vine grows on calcareous declivities where the chalk is mixed with flints. Every process of manufacture is conducted with a thoughtful care, of which Burgundy ought to be ashamed. Black grapes are used for the best white sparkling and foaming Champagnes. The fruit is picked at sunrise, while the dew is still glistening on the bunches and pearling on the crimson and yellowing leaves. The foggier the vintage weather, the better the fermentation goes. Black grapes are found to resist the frost and rains of vintage time, better than the white. They are picked with minute care and patience, almost one by one; every rotten or unripe berry, every berry frost-bitten, bird-pecked, wasp-eaten, or bruised, is trodden under foot, as worse than useless. In gathering the fruit, in emptying the baskets, in carting them to the press, all rapid motion is avoided, and they are placed in the cool shade. They are then spread carefully on the press and crushed rapidly, but only for an hour. Each pressing has its own name and forms a specific quality. The precious juice is removed from the vats, early on the following day, and poured into sulphured puncheons. Soon after Christmas, the fermentation being over, on the first dry frosty day, the wine is racked; a month after, it is racked again and fined with isinglass; and before it is bottled it is again racked and fined. By the month of March, it is all in bottles, and six weeks afterwards it becomes brisk. The sediment that collects in the neck of the horizontal bottles, has then to be removed by taking out the corks and adding fresh wine. This entails a great loss; in fact, an irritable Champagne wine merchant, would soon lose his senses, his loss is so perpetual. In July and August, the five hundred or six hundred thousand bottles that M. Moet stores in his limestone caverns at Epernay, fly and shatter by dozens, and the workmen have to go down with wire masks on, to try and stop the popular effervescence. The great brittle piles, six feet high, will sometimes burst and explode, whole hills of them, in a week: sending the Champagne in floods over the floors, or cascading their sounder brethren. Then, the closing the bottles by clinking them together and rejecting every one that has too long or too short a neck, or that has even a suspicious air bubble in its thin green walls, is also expensive. Costly, too, and dangerous is the mode of corking, by sharply striking the cork: the bottle at the time being placed on a stool covered with sheet lead.

From beginning to end, the manufacture of this wine is precarious and complicated, nor can we wonder that many respectable merchants at Rheims never sell it under three francs a bottle, however plentiful the vintage. It may well reach a high price before it comes on our tables.

An average Champagne vintage produces, Mr. Redding informs us, forty million nine hundred and sixty-eight thousand and thirty-three and three-quarters gallons, from one hundred and thirty-eight thousand eight hundred and seventy acres of vines. The merchants of Paris and Meaux take nearly all the growth of the Epernay arondissement. In 1836 France consumed six hundred and twenty-six thousand bottles. The export was then reported at—England and East Indies, four hundred and sixty-seven thousand bottles; Germany, four hundred and seventy-nine thousand; America, four hundred thousand; Russia, two hundred and eighty thousand; and Sweden and Denmark, thirty thousand.

We have already shown that pink Champagne is a mistake, a mere poetical fancy. We must now repeat an old warning—the briskest and frothiest Champagne is never the best. The brisk wines are always defective in vinous quality; the small portion of alcohol they have, passes off in the froth, and the aroma with it. Humboldt proved this by collecting Champagne froth under a bell-glass, surrounded with ice. The alcohol instantly became condensed on the sides of the vessel.

The reason why Champagne sometimes plays old Gooseberry with us, is because it contains so much of young Gooseberry. Bad Champagne tastes of brown sugar-candy and brandy. For the French and Americans, the foreign wine doctors add one-fifth of wine and syrup; for the fiery Englishman, who will swallow anything, one-tenth of brandy and syrup.

They also (the treacherous villains), use capillaire, Madeira, Kirsch, and strawberry syrup. Nay, the Americans have actually made Champagne from petroleum. As there is but one positively good vintage to six ordinary or bad vintages, it is necessary, the rascals of Rheims believe, to sugar-candy and brandy the acrid and weak wine that the sun has frowned upon, and in the language of the trade "bring it up to the mark." And here we have one answer to the question, What is a mock sun?

THE JUBILEE AT BONN.

In August last, the University of Bonn celebrated the jubilee of its foundation. It was the close of the academical year, and all the living children of the university were called together to greet each other in honour of their common mother. From Berlin came the Crown Prince, and other personages of state who, like him, had studied at Bonn; from Ems, the King; and from every corner of Germany, innumerable representatives of bygone generations of students. From the more ancient universities of Germany, came the most distinguished of the professors, as deputations to greet their young sister of the Rhine.

The festival was to commence on Saturday, and continue until the following Wednesday. On Saturday, Bonn was full of visitors. Bonn is the very model of a university town. It is not an offshoot of the university; it has a being of its own, but subordinated to the wants of the great seat of learning to which at present

it owes its chief glory. Its handsome streets are free from the bustle of a great trading city, but yet are full of large and well furnished shops. Though one of the largest and most ancient of the Rhine cities, there is no trace of wretchedness or squalor in it. Everywhere is an air of quiet, easy, artistic industry, well according with the neighbourhood of a seat of learning. On this occasion there was bustle enough, but pervading it all, a unity and an absence of confusion, particularly agreeable. Every inhabitant of Bonn entered into the spirit of the celebration, and did his or her best towards it. Every street was gay with a multitude of flags, their infinite variety of colour contrasting with the pure white of the house fronts. Innumerable garlands, around balcony, window, and door, diffused an air of freshness abroad.

The students of the university were, of course, at the heart of all the out-door celebrations. The ordinary student life supplied ready machinery for organising the displays. Most of the students belong to clubs which are either Corps or Verbindungen. All the members of these associations wear caps of various bright colours, red, or mauve, or blue, or green, according to the colour of the corps; while the high officers of the body are arrayed in the full dress of the old student period, when it was the privilege of the students to use swords against the staves of the townsmen. The corps have somewhat of a military organisation, and on these festive occasions bear the palm from their more philosophical rivals, who are above—or below—such vanities as uniforms and bright colours. The procession of the corps came off in the evening, when all the strangers were supposed to have arrived, and the decorations for the next four days to be complete. The rich colours of the flags, the bright uniforms of the students, the joyous music, the universal good-humour, and over all the mellow light of an August sunset, gave a pleasant foretaste of the spectacles to come.

A large portion of Sunday was devoted to special services in honour of the occasion, in the churches of the different religious denominations; and in the afternoon to solemn speechmaking within the university. But towards evening the students and the townspeople betook themselves to other enjoyments. The great green in front of the university buildings, had been surrounded by poles bearing garlands for the day time and Chinese lanterns for the night. At each of the four corners of this space, was a cask of beer, large enough to make one reflect that Diogenes might not have had so very cramped a dwelling after all. But the contents of the cask, not the cask, interested the crowd; and from morn until midnight the drinking, and the feasting, and the music were continual. Uproar or riot there was none, and this was the assemblage of the populace only. The students and their friends had *their* meeting in the gardens of an hotel close by. These gardens are large, and run down to the bank of the Rhine. Two of the best Prussian military bands played in turn, in different corners of the gardens; admirable concerts were given by parties of students. There was many a group of white-haired old fellows toasting each other, or singing hand in hand with all the excitement of boyhood. The drinking was prodigious; many parties of students who either could not find a seat, or preferred seeing their friends, dispensed with glasses altogether, and paraded about, each with a bottle, stopping at the end of a verse to take a full draught. As the bottles were emptied—and this was not a tedious process—they were tossed into the flower-beds, from which the waiters collected them in baskets. The arrival of the Crown Prince actually evoked something like a cheer, singularly different from the monotonous wail with which a German crowd usually express their enthusiasm. By eleven o'clock the majority seemed to have drunk quite enough; but still here, as in the popular assemblage outside, there was no rioting. Everybody was in good-humour, and took everything in good part. And now, before the assemblage dispersed, it was delightful to steal to the edge of the terrace, and, looking away from the garden, with its Chinese lanterns and fireworks, its music and merry occupants, to see the broad Rhine, flowing peacefully below. The moon had just risen over the Seven Mountains, and shed her calm cold light on the exquisite outline and broad expanse of water, a vision of silent beauty, in charming contrast with the lively scene.

To enjoy these drinking parties thoroughly, one must be a student, or at least a German; but no such condition was necessary to the full appreciation of the torchlight processions on the following evening, or the illumination of the Rhine, with which the festival concluded. The procession was shared in by all the students of the university. They started, at about nine o'clock, from the university, and, going round the town, came into the market-place through one of the old narrow picturesque streets. As the procession streamed along, the lurid flare of the torches lighted up the innumerable banners which fluttered, in every variety of hue, from roof to window. The chief officers of the various corps rode on horseback, in their gaudy quaint dresses; and frequent bands drowned the murmured cheers of the crowd.

But the holiday makers had wisely determined to turn their great natural glory, the Rhine, to the best account. For the last night, preparations were made on the most extensive scale. The university and municipality bestowed liberal sums on all the villages on the banks, from Bonn up to lovely Rolandseck. At the latter place the illuminations began, and thither, after sunset, in numerous steamers, went all the sight-seeing world of Bonn and Cologne. The fireworks at Rolandseck were abundant, and about as disappointing as fireworks usually are. But, as the boats turned back towards Bonn, a much finer spectacle lay before them. Magnesian

light was used, with the best effect, to illuminate the churches and castles and other prominent objects on either bank. On the Rolandseck side, the hills were lighted, from the water's edge to the summit. Opposite towered the Drachenfels, with its wooded sides in complete darkness. On the summit alone, the ruins blazed with the red light of Cingalese fire. The quaint outline of the ruin, the unnatural glare of the red light, the sombre majesty of the dark woods beneath, recalled the old legend of the dragon and his dishes of maid's flesh. From Königswinter to Beul, a distance of nearly eight miles, the illumination was complete. On the water's edge, burned immense bonfires at regular intervals. Every little rising ground, every church and mansion, was illuminated by the magnesian light. The broad lake-like expanse of the waters, mirrored the fires on either bank. The vessels steamed gently on, without lights, but all carrying bands of music. In the darkness of the night the quick flash and deep boom of the firing from every village, considerably heightened the general effect of the illumination.

But, after all, the principal charm of this festival for a stranger was the occasional glimpses it gave him of a warmhearted and æsthetic people in the height of enjoyment and good humour. Now, there was a party of the officers of the corps in their fantastic array, strutting through the streets exulting in the admiration of the shop girls. Then there was some meeting between old and distinguished alumni of the university: their grave intellectual faces lighted up with the memory of the old time when they were students together. Now, the market place was deserted, and all had betaken themselves to the various inns for the one o'clock dinner. The passers-by in the bright hot sunshine, heard nothing but the buzz of conversation and the clink of glasses, as the holiday-makers drank to each other, with the shutters nearly closed to keep out the sun. The stillness was suddenly broken by the rattle of wheels and the sound of music. A party of students returning to dinner from a country excursion, to make their entry with proper effect, had picked up a barrel-organ. The performer stood on the coach box beside the driver, and ground away. With tremendous speed they rattled over the pavement and made the circuit of the monument in the centre of the market-place. In a moment the windows were opened, and greetings exchanged. The students within, crowded the windows, with glasses filled to the brim, which, with marvellous dexterity, they handed down to the new comers without spilling a drop. Then there was clinking of glasses, shouting and laughter, and the organ man ground away as if it were the last moment of his existence. The glasses were emptied, the organ and coach discharged, the new arrivals disappeared into the hotel, and all was quiet again.

What the kings of Prussia have done for Bonn, and what Bonn has done and intends yet to do for Deutschland, was set forth in many orations during these days both within and without the university. All this may be learned from various sources. Infinitely more valuable to the beholder was the view this celebration gave him of the true spirit of German festivity, of its genuine jollity and heartiness, of its sustained capacity of enjoyment, which never wearied, and yet never degenerated into riot or debauchery.

FAR WESTERN JUDGES AND JURIES.

In the United States (and indeed also in Canada) there is no distinction between barrister and attorney, and, in the newer settlements, to become either requires little study. It used to be said that in some parts of Oregon all a man had to do to be admitted an attorney was to go round for some time with a law book under his arm, and talk "constitootion" in front of "grocery" doors. A gentleman of Oregon gave me a copy of a legal document, preserved in the archives of Marion County, Oregon, and written by an attorney (I knew the man) regularly licensed to practise. It is a demurrer to a complaint in an action, in which Marion County is the plaintiff and one G. B. Wagnon defendant, brought for the recovery of a fine for violating a statute in the disposition of estray animals. Part of it runs precisely thus:

"And now comes G B Wagnon the Defnat in the a Bove Sute or Cause And files a Demworer and says that the plaintiff Should not have Nor maintain his Action a Gainst Said Defanant for the following says there is not that plain and concise Statement of the facts constituting the cause of action as there is no De Scription of Cauller markes, nor Brands nor by hoom apraysed

"and further Says that he was not Seerved with a certifyed coppy of said Complant therefore the Defenant prays this honorable Cort to Dis mss the a Bove Sute this 8th day of December 1859"

Another attorney delivered a famous defence of a man who was caught in the act of stealing a hank of cotton yarn. It ran something like this:

"Gentlemen of the Jury, do you think my client Thomas Flinn, off Muddy Creek and the Big Willamette, would be guilty o' stealin' a hank o' cotting yarn? Gentlemen of the Jury, I reckon not, I s'pose not. By no manner of means, gentlemen, not at all! He are not guilty! TOM FLINN? Good heavings! Gentlemen, you all know Tom Flinn, and, on honour, now, gentlemen, do you think he'd do it? No, gentlemen! I s'pose not—I reckon not. THOMAS FLINN? Why" (warming up with virtuous indignation) "why, great snakes and alligators! Tom's a whole team on Muddy Creek and a hoss to let! And" (insinuatingly) "do you think he'd sneak off with a miserable hank o' cotting yarn? Well, gentlemen, I reckon not.

I s'pose not! When the wolves was a howling, gentlemen, on the mountings of Oregon, and the milishy was a fighting of the Injins on Rogue River, do you think, gentlemen, my client, Thomas Flinn, *Esq.*, could be guilty o' hookin'—yes, hookin', gentlemen—that pitiful, low, mean, hank o' cotting yarn? Onpossible! Gentlemen, I reckon I know my client, Mr. Thomas Flinn. He's got the fastest nag, and the purtiest sister, gentlemen, in all Muddy Creek and the Big Willamette! That, gentlemen, *are* a fact. Yes, gentlemen, that are a *fact*. You kin just bet on that, gentlemen. Yes, gentlemen, you kin jist bet your bones on that! Now, 'pon honour, gentlemen, do you think he *are* guilty? Gentlemen, I reckon—I s'pose not. Why, gentlemen" (indignantly, beginning to believe it himself), "my client, Mr. Thomas Flinn, am no more guilty of stealin' that aer hank o' cotting yarn than a toad has got a tail. Yes, a tail, gentlemen! Than a toad has got a tail!" Verdict for defendant, case dismissed, and court adjourned to whisky up at late prisoner's expense.

Little as such law may be worth, it is surprising with what alacrity a young community of miners or backwoodsmen will attempt to form some organisation for the preservation of order according to law, and how naturally they proceed to elect a magistrate or "Judge" out of their number. This desire proceeds in part from a wish to preserve order, and in part from the all engrossing passion for voting, holding "conventions," and "caucusses," and electing somebody to hold some office or other, with the usual amount of speechifying and drinking.

An old gentleman, with whom I passed many pleasant evenings on the Walls of Panama in days gone by, described to me his recollection of a court-room in a western state. It was a rough log building with a bar of unhewn timber stretched across it. This was the bar of justice. Behind it was a table with a jar of molasses, a bottle of vinegar, and a jug of water to make "switchel" for the court.

Time ten A.M. Enter Sheriff. Judge (who is paring his corns after the manner of the venerable Judge McAlmond, of San Francisco, who was in the habit of paring his corns while the business of the court was going on, and generally sat with his heels tilted up in front of him): "Wal, Mr. Sheriff, do you think we'll get a jury to-day?"

"Neow, judge, jurymen are raither scarce today; but I've got eleven men coralled under a black walnut tree outside, and my niggers are hunting deown a twelvth. I reckon we'll have a jury in about half an hour."

And so the sheriff proceeds to liquor, and the judge continues paring his corns until the court opens.

I was assured by a former chief justice of one of the states on the western slope of the Rocky Mountains, that the first grand jury he ever charged were sitting on the prairie under a tree, and there was not a man of them that had on any other foot gear but mocassins. And I know a judge who, in the earlier days of California, when everybody was "bound to make money," sat on the bench in the morning, mined during the day, and played the fiddle in a whisky shop at night. The county judge of Madison county, in Washington territory, does (or did) "run" the "gang saw" in the Port Madison mills.

In these judges we often find the notion of law not very defined, though (which is more important) that of equity is strong. A most notorious "rowdy," from New England, who had escaped the law several times, was at last captured in the act of smashing the interior of a Chinese house of ill fame, in the little village of Eureka, in North California. Evidence against him was rather weak, and it was feared he would again escape. But when the prisoner was brought into court, his honour burst upon him with a tirade of abuse: "E-e-h! Ye long, leathern, lantern-jawed, Yankee cuss, we've ketched you, e-e-h, at last? I'll commit him at once!"

"But, judge," whispered the clerk, "you'll have to hear the evidence."

"Evidence be blowed!" was the rejoinder. "Wasn't I thar, and see'd it all myself?"

Judge P. was holding a term of the district court in the village of Corvallis, in the then territory of Oregon. His court was held in a common log house, with a large open fireplace, and a few rough heavy benches, that had never known plane. An indictment was found against one Charley Sandborn for selling whisky at retail, although he had no licence. He stood at one side of the fireplace with his hands deep in his pockets; the judge sat upon the end of a school bench on the other side of the fire. When required to plead guilty or not guilty, Charley threw himself on the mercy of the court. The judge then sentenced him to pay the lowest fine and costs. At the close of the sentence, by way of personal palliation, his lordship remarked, "that while it was the duty of the court to enforce the laws as it found them on the statute book, the person of the court was not inimical to men who sold whisky."

There is in Idaho territory a judge who is well known as "Alec Smith." A woman brought suit in his court for divorce, and had the discernment to select a particular friend of her own, who stood well with the judge, as her attorney. One morning the judge called up the case, and addressing himself to the attorney for the complainant, said: "Mr. H., I don't think people ought to be compelled to live together where they don't want to, and I will decree a divorce in this case." Mr. H. bowed blandly. Thereupon the judge, turning to another attorney, whom he took to be the counsel for the defendant, said: "Mr. M., I suppose you have no objection to the decree?" Mr. M. nodded assent. But the attorney for the defendant was another Mr. M., not then in court. Presently he came in, and finding that his client had been divorced without a hearing, began to remonstrate. Alec listened a moment,

then interrupted, saying: "Mr. M., it is too late. The court has pronounced the decree of divorce, and the parties are no longer man and wife. But if you want to argue the case, right bad, the court can marry them over again and give you a crack at it."

I was at Clear Lake, when an Irishman, named Jerry McCarthy, was tried in the county court on a charge of whipping his wife. A point of law was raised by the attorney for the defence as to the admissibility of certain evidence offered by the district attorney, "Judge" J. H. Thompson (for it is "judge" once, "judge" always), and the court called upon the attorney to produce his authorities to sustain his position. The attorney being rather slow in finding the law in point, the court, just as he had found it, and was rising to read it, ruled that the evidence was not admissible. "The deuce you do!" hallooed the district attorney. "Say, judge, I read you the law, and bet you a thousand dollars I'm right." "I'll send you to jail for twenty-four hours for contempt of court!" cried the judge. "Send to jail and be hanged!" cried the district attorney. "I know my rights, and intend to maintain them." The judge then called out "Sheriff Crigler, Crigler Sheriff, take Judge Thompson to jail, and adjourn court four-and-twenty hours!" Crigler advanced to obey the order, but halted upon seeing the district attorney put himself into a "posish;" at the same time shouting loud enough to be heard all over the town that neither Crigler nor any other man should carry him to jail. To make things sure, the sheriff called for a commitment; but while this was being prepared mutual apologies passed between the court and the district attorney, and the order was revoked. The court was then adjourned for a quarter of an hour, to allow, according to custom made and provided in such cases, of "drinks" being exchanged; after which the trial proceeded to its result in the acquittal of the defendant. If all stories be true, occasionally the court adjourns in less favoured districts, to allow antagonistic attorneys to fight out with their fists what couldn't be settled by their tongues. I witnessed once—not in a rough American territory—but in the British town of Victoria, Vancouver Island—a "stand-up" fight between the "Honourable the Attorney-General" and a client of the opposite party in a suit; and not long afterwards two of the most prominent of the members of the colonial parliament engaged in a like encounter. I mention this, lest it might be unjustly supposed that these eccentricities are found exclusively in border parts of the United States.

One summer afternoon I happened to pass through a frontier village in by no means the newest State of the Pacific settlements. While my horse was baiting, hearing that the supreme court was in session, I strolled in. After passing up a ricketty stair, thickly sprinkled with saliva, cigar ends, and sawdust, where the rough unplaned board walls were scrawled over with likenesses of "Judge" This and "Judge" That, and remarks upon them, personally, politically, and judicially, I entered, by a ricketty old door, a plastered room with a whitewashed board ceiling, but very dirty, and a floor covered with sawdust. On a few forms scattered through the room, lolled some "citizens" half asleep. They turned round at the sound of my jingling Mexican spurs, but finding that I was only a rough fellow with a buckskin shirt on, lolled back again and dozed off to sleep until aroused by some particular burst of eloquence from the lips of a linen-coated lawyer who was speaking furiously on the "jumping" of a mining claim. When anything particular seized the fancy of the "citizens," they would applaud in a lazy manner, and once or twice an enthusiastic miner in gum boots, with his cheek distended by an enormous "chaw" of tobacco, shouted "Bully!" "Good again!" and "That's so, judge!" But he was, I am glad to say, instantly quashed, though only partially put down; for he would still breathe out, in a lower tone, "Bu—lly!" "Good on yer head!" and so on, and explain to me (in a stage whisper) the peculiar merits of the case, in which it would seem he was interested; for he was the only person present who cared anything about the proceedings. Except the lawyer's voice and the whispering of his excited client, there was no noise in the court but the fall of a disused quid or the squirting of tobacco juice.

The lawyers sat at a horseshoe table at one end of the room; most of them sound asleep with their chairs tilted back and their heels on the table before them. In front of them on a raised platform, sat a gentleman without a waistcoat, but with a long and rather dusty brown linen coat, over a somewhat dirty white shirt without a collar. He, too, had his legs up in front of him, and was likewise chewing tobacco with a slow motion of his leathery jaws; for the heat of the day and the somniferous character of the proceedings seemed to have disposed him to sleep, like everybody else. Now and then he would incline his head, but only to squirt the rejected juice between his legs. Sometimes, when the lawyer indulged in unbecoming language in reference to the court, he would start up, and in the excitement of the moment miss his aim and squirt over among the sleepy counsel. Finally he had to charge the jury, which he did in a very sensible and thoroughly legal manner. He was a good lawyer and had been attentive to the case. However, in my eyes it detracted a little from his honour's dignity, to see him take the half used quid from his mouth and hold it between his thumb and forefinger, while he charged.

In the course of the evening I had a chance of making very close acquaintance with "his Honour." The little village hotel was crowded with an unwonted concourse of lawyers and jurymen, and, when I made up my mind to stay over the night, the "proprietor" (there are no landlords in America) informed me that he "reckoned Judge —— had the only single bed,

and if I liked to put in with him, I might get to stay somehow." Not wishing to inconvenience his Honour, I preferred to pass the night in my own blanket, on the "stoup" or porch of the building.

I have seen a judge who is said, in pursuance of his duty as a magistrate, to have fined a man twenty-five dollars for shooting at another, but who also (swayed by his feelings as a man) mulcted the other in the same figure, for not shooting back again.

At the Cariboo gold mines in British Columbia lives a well-known Irish gold commissioner, whose common-sense decisions have gained great reputation throughout that section of country. On one occasion two mining companies came before him with some dispute. One swore one way, and the other swore the exactly opposite way. The "judge" was nonplussed. "Look here, boys," at last was his sage decision, "there's no use you going to law about it. There's some hard swearing somewhere; where I won't pretend to say. *You* say this, and *they* say that, aye, and produce witnesses, too. What am I to do? Of course, if you insist I'll come to a decision; but I honestly confess it will be only a toss up. I tell you what's the best thing to do. You know my shanty down the creek?" All shouted in the affirmative. "Well, in that shanty there's a bottle of prime whisky, in which I will be happy to drink luck to both of you. Now, the first man there, gets the suit. Go!" Out of the court they rushed, down the creek, over logs, and over mining flumes, tumbling and rolling and running, with half the population after them, until they reached the cabin in question. When the judge arrived shortly afterwards, he found a stalwart miner firmly grasping the handle of the door. The whisky was produced, luck was drunk, and everybody went away, perfectly satisfied with the decision.

Most commendable on the whole, is the patience evinced by these judges under the orations of long-winded and not very learned attorneys. The most extraordinary instance of patience was that of a judge in Illinois, who, after two wordy lawyers had argued and re-argued about the meaning of a certain Act of Congress, closed the whole at the end of the second day by calmly remarking, "Gentlemen, the Act is repealed!"

Mr. Justice Begbie, of British Columbia, the terror of evil doers, and of too sympathising jurors, had occasion to caution a witness. "Don't prevaricate, sir, don't prevaricate; remember that you are on oath!" The excuse was, "How can I help it, judge, when I have such an almighty bad toothache!"

If the learning of the judge puzzles the witness, sometimes the dog Latin of the lawyers puzzles a judge. A short time ago, in San Francisco, a hotly contested case came on in a certain justice's court in the city, which is presided over by a magistrate with a strong antipathy to the dead languages, and all who indulge in the affectation of using them. Plaintiff having put in his complaint in due form, the judge demanded what was the defendant's answer. Whereupon the defendant's counsel, who had been brought up under the old system and still had a lingering love for scraps of law Latin, responded, "May it please the court, our answer is that the same subject matter and cause of action in this suit was the subject matter and cause of action in a previous suit already determined, in consequence of which the question now raised before your honour, is res adjudicata." "Is what?" cried the judge, adjusting his spectacles. "Res adjudicata, if the court pleases." "Sir," roared the judge, "we allow no dead languages here. Plain English is good enough for us. The Practice has abolished the dead languages, and if you give us any more of your Greek or Latin I'll commit you, sir, for contempt of this court."

In the early days of California, one of these rough-and-ready dispensers of the law held a court on a Sunday, and sentenced a "greaser" (a native Californian or Mexican), according to the law then in force, to thirty-nine lashes, for theft; but on the prisoner's counsel threatening to apply for a writ of habeas corpus, on the ground that it was "unconstitootional" to hold a court on a Sunday, the judge declared, with a round oath, that rather than the (blessed) greaser should get off by any such pettifogging trick, he would carry the sentence into effect "right away." And then and there he applied the thirty-nine lashes (the law limiting them to *under* forty), remarking, when he had finished, that the lawyer had better reserve his "habeas corpus until the greaser's back got barked again!"

The Missouri sheriff might truly enough remark that "jurymen aer raither scarce." More than once a friend who knew the ways of the country has informed me, as a kindness, that "there wor a (blessed) jury trial agwine on down to Humbug City, and, as I reckon, the sheriff's darned run for jurymen, you'd better kinder work round clar of that loc-ality." If I asked, "How can I be a juryman? I am a foreigner, a stranger, a traveller, who has neither land nor lot, neither votes nor pays taxes?" "Ah, that would be mighty little 'count," would be the reply; "you hev paid taxes, for you paid your head money; and as for not being a resident, I reckon the sheriff 'll soon make ye out a residence; and as for your being a furrener, it don't matter shucks; that's the very thing you'll be spotted for. The sheriff has summoned every citizen to coroners' and jury trials, and every other darned sort of trial, so mighty often, that they swar, if summoned much oftener, they won't vote for him next election. And as 'lection comes on in March, I sorter reckon he'll like to corall a coon or two who ain't got no vote."

At last I really was caught, and it was useless to remonstrate. The sheriff declared "jurymen *were* scarce, and I must just take a turn at it." To my astonishment, under the idea, I suppose, that I was "a right smart chance

of a scholar," I was chosen foreman of the jury, and in this capacity assisted in sending a man to the States prison for two months, as a reward for his mechanical skill having been diverted into the channel of making bogus gold dust. We had considerable difficulty in arriving at a unanimous verdict, as two of the jury were personal friends of the prisoner. In this stage a backwoods-man, producing a pack of cards from his pocket, proposed that we should play "seven up" for a decision; or, if we objected to gambling, we could at least "draw straws for it."

At a little backwoods saw-mill settlement called Alberni, Vancouver Island, an Indian had been stealing potatoes from a farm belonging to Mr. Sproat, the local justice, and in order to frighten this Indian, the man in charge, who was a Western backwoods-man, fired his gun vaguely in the potatoe-field direction. To his astonishment he shot the native dead. An inquest had to be held. The woodmen, of course, looked upon a slain Indian as a very light affair, and several came to Mr. Sproat and said: "You are not going to trouble Henry about this, are you, sir?" Mr. Sproat, being not only master, but a magistrate, had only to reply that however much he felt for the man's misfortune, he must let the law take its course. But where was a surgeon to be found, to make a post mortem examination? A careworn looking man stepped off a pile of lumber where he was working, and said he was a surgeon. This statement being naturally received with some hesitation, he produced from an old army chest, his commission, his degree, and ample proof of not only having been a medical man, but of once having been a staff surgeon. He soon produced a pea from the lung, and showed that the Indian had died from gunshot wounds in the chest. Evidence was produced in corroboration, one of the witnesses testifying that the prisoner had said, "Jack, I've shot an Indian." The "judge" laid down their duty to the jury, which was composed of twelve of the most intelligent of the workmen, and they were sent into another room for their finding. It was nearly half-an-hour before they returned. The foreman then said: "We find the siwash* was worried by a dog." "A what?" the judge exclaimed. "Worried by a dog, sir," said another juryman, fearing that the foreman had not spoken clearly. Assuming a proper expression of magisterial gravity, his worship pointed out to the jury the incompatibility of their finding with the evidence, and again went over the points of the case, calling particular attention to the medical evidence, and the production by the doctor of the pea found in the body of the Indian; after which he a second time dismissed the jury to their room, and begged them to come back with some verdict reasonably connected with the facts of the case. They were away longer than before. When they at length sidled back into the room for the second time, the judge drew a paper towards him to record their finding. "Now, men, what do you say?" Their decisive answer was, "We say he was killed by falling over a cliff." The judge shuffled his papers together, and told the jurymen they might go to their work, and he would return a verdict for them himself. For a full mile every way, from where the dead body was found, the country was as level as a table.

This jury was not so conscientious as another composed of the friends of some people accused of stealing pork: "We find the defendants Not Guilty; *but we believe they hooked the pork.*"

* Siwash, corrupted from the voyageurs' Sauvage, a savage, universally applied to Indians on the North Pacific Coast.

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HESTER'S HISTORY.

A New Serial Tale.

CHAPTER XIV. GOING TO GLENLUCE.

On this subject—the question of how Hester was to be conveyed to Glenluce—the Mother Augustine took council with her brother. For Sir Archie Munro had not yet gone from London.

He had been coming nearly every day to visit his sister in her convent, and very often he had seen Hester at her work in the mother's room. He acknowledged himself rather shocked at her childish occupation of dressing dolls; thought her too full-grown and serious-looking for so simple a diversion.

"She does these little things very prettily, you know," he said one day, when she was absent at Hampton Court, and he lifted and handled a little figure with a man's curiosity about a woman's work. "But isn't it rather an odd amusement for a young woman? And she is a young woman, you know, Mary; young, indeed, but still a woman."

The Mother Augustine was very merry over this mistake. "So you have thought that poor Hester was playing the baby!" she said. "But you must know that each of these figures represents a woman—my mother, for instance, or Cousin Madge."

"My mother! Cousin Madge!" repeated Sir Archie, in bewilderment.

"Yes, or any other lady requiring to be handsomely clothed by a pair of skilful hands. These are not a child's dolls, but a dressmaker's models."

Sir Archie did not follow the explanation. At all events, it did not enlighten him as to Hester's actual calling.

"And I want to consult with you about getting our young protégée sent to Ireland," said the mother. "I have found her a home. You could never guess where. In Glenluce Castle."

Sir Archie's face beamed with satisfaction. "Why, how have you managed it?" he said. "I should not have thought it easy to persuade my mother to invite her. I did think myself of petitioning Aunt Margaret——"

"But, Archie," said the mother, gravely, "You must not be under a mistake. This young girl is not going as a visitor to Glenluce. My mother needs a dressmaker and seamstress at the Castle, and I have accepted the situation for Hester."

Sir Archie was a long time taking it in. That his mother should have need of some one to do her sewing he could not wonder, but that Hester should be sent into his house in such a character; it did not seem to please him.

"I do not think such an arrangement can ever suit," he said. "Aunt Margaret would have taken her in upon a visit. I had thought of writing to her."

"You had thought of writing to her!" said the Mother Augustine, in surprise, and then checked herself and was silent, though she looked as if she could have said more.

Her brother glanced up suddenly, at the change in her voice, and met her eyes. And then he did a thing unheard of in the family traditions of Sir Archie—blushed.

The Mother Augustine returned Hester's little lay figure to its box in silence; and began to speak of something else. In the midst of such speaking the sound of a carriage was heard outside upon the stones, the door was thrown open, and Hester appeared.

Her fair hair was dressed gracefully under a pretty little hat. She wore a pale grey robe of silk, and long coral ear-rings in her ears. Her cheeks were flushed with a slight shame, and her lips were quivering with a joyful smile. She was conscious of being better dressed than it was fitting she should be, but so eager to see her friend that the uneasiness of such consciousness was swallowed up in joy.

She advanced a few steps into the room, then stopped short, and stood abashed. Sir Archie on the one side looked flushed and embarrassed, the Mother Augustine, on the other, looked grave and displeased.

Hester stood, as at bay, for a few moments, seeming as if she would have turned and run away, then suddenly came forward rapidly, pulled off her coquettish hat and threw it on the table.

"I knew how it would be," she said, in a low vehement voice, a tear flashing from under her drooped eyelids. "Lady Humphrey would insist on dressing me up so. I knew it was not right; that you would not like it."

The Mother Augustine glanced at her brother, and caught the expression of his face, before he

turned and walked away to the window. It seemed that things were taking a strange turn. But no perplexity of mind could make the mother unjust, even for an hour.

She drew a long anxious sigh, and put her arm round the girl's trembling figure.

"Put on your pretty hat, my child," she said. "Your charming dress becomes you very well." Perhaps she reflected that if the pearl had already been discovered, it did not make much matter about the setting. But none the less was she uneasy in her mind. Sir Archie was not a man who took much notice of strange women. If his peculiar interest in Hester should continue, what was this that she, the Mother Augustine, had done?

But, let the mischief be what it might, it was accomplished. Hester's trunks were in the convent hall, side by side with the small luggage of a lay sister who was to travel with her to Ireland. Lady Helen, among her mountains, was waiting impatiently to be attired like one of the dolls upon her dressing-table. Hester must go, come what might.

A strong foreshadowing of some part of the strange things which were to happen was on the Mother Augustine's mind when she gave her parting instructions to Hester.

One of these injunctions came right pleasantly to the girl's ear, though she did not know at the time how much it comprehended. It was this:

"If ever you are in a difficulty, remember that you can find a friend in Mrs. Hazeldean."

But another was more startling, and not so easy to obey.

"Unless absolutely questioned on the subject, you are not to speak of your connexion with Lady Humphrey. You are not even to mention her name."

Now how could this injunction be obeyed? Hester remembered Lady Humphrey's last instructions, which were yet ringing in her ears. She remembered Pierce Humphrey's petition, and her promise made to him. She wore his ring on a ribbon, for safety, round her neck. She blushed up to her hair at this new command.

"It will be difficult——" began Hester.

"You need not find it difficult," said the mother. "You may speak of her to Mrs. Hazeldean, but not at the Castle. It will make mischief if you are foolish enough to forget this."

So Hester reluctantly gave her word. What then? Was she to post her letters secretly to Lady Humphrey? It must be so; for she could not forget her promise which had been made to that lady, nor misuse her opportunity of doing a service to Sir Archie. She kept thinking how much would the mother alter her way of thinking did she know Lady Humphrey's anxiety about her brother. But here also she was bound to silence. And she departed on her journey considering deeply in her mind how best she should be able to obey both these friends.

The lay sister who travelled with Hester was bound for the little convent at Glenluce. Sir Archie acted as escort on the journey, and the three arrived in the shades of an autumn evening at Glenluce Castle gate.

There was company at the castle; a few visitors from Dublin. Lights were glinting from the small windows of the long low grey wall of the oldest wing, but the ivy-covered turrets still kept some hue of their rich green in the outer air. A faint glow from the vanished sun still hung about the castellated summits of the walls, while the damp purple air of the heavy twilight had darkened the more distant walls and chimneys, and grouped them along with the trees in an indistinguishable mass. That odour which tells of the neighbourhood of heathery mountains was in the air, mingled with the perfumes from well-stocked gardens somewhere near. There was a murmur of waters all around, for the falls had already begun their music; and when the wind took a fit of wrestling among the trees, pale streaks of moving mist became visible between the shadows, like long spectres descending out of the clouds, and crawling with straggling limbs along the hills to the lower earth.

The entrance to the castle was new when compared with the little old gate, studded with big black nails, which now frowned in disgrace at the back of the building. Yet even this door, which was called new, looked old-fashioned enough, with its oddly shaped steps and its curious bronze urns. If Lady Helen Munro had not been busy in her dressing-room she might have come to this open door to welcome her son upon the threshold, such good old customs having it all their own way at Glenluce. It was lucky, perhaps, that there was a delay in the fixing of an ear-ring, or the pinning of a ringlet, or this lady of a noble house might have fainted on a mat to see the order of his arrival, and his conduct on the occasion. Yet the simple lay sister, who remained sitting quietly in the coach, waiting to be moved on, saw nothing but what was fitting in Sir Archie's care of Hester.

But the lay sister departed, and went dreaming through the dusk, down the glen, about her people who had been buried in the little graveyard by the sea, whose peaceful graves she should visit on the morrow. And, forgetting fever, and cholera, bad wounds, and broken limbs, she strewed her prayers on the night air as she went, all in thanksgiving that she had seen her native glens once again.

In the mean time Hester was in the castle hall on the stairs, in an upper corridor, where she was detained a few moments standing waiting, the servant who was attending her having been called away by accident. There was everywhere a dim religious light, and an air of ancient repose about the grandeur of the place. As if in its nobility there was no disdain. As if the same time that had rubbed the edges of its carvings, rounded the little corners, and softened most sharp-set outlines, had stolen the fire of barbaric pride from the oak heart of

the ancient roof-tree, and only left a solemn dignity in its place. Here was something that impressed one, as if a simple childlike spirit were looking forth from solemn eyes.

Two voices went whispering, round the corner of the passage, of servants who had met going their several errands.

"Praises be to God, he's home!" said one whisper. "They were havin' it in the village this mornin' that he was took."

"Holy Vargin!" said the other, "I niver h'ard a word o' that. Did her ladyship know it?"

"Not herself!" said the first whisper, "or it's in stericks she'd a been. We kep' it dark as dungeon in the kitchen. But the people in the village har'ly slep' a wink all night."

"Well, thank the Lord of Heaven, we have him back safe an' sound."

And then Hester's conductor made an appearance, with apologies; and the stranger was conducted to her room.

It was a ghostly round room, this room in the east tower, which had been assigned to the new comer's especial use. It had two quaint turret windows, knowing the secrets of the glen, looking down on green peaceful slopes, peering up at wild lonely wildernesses of wood, and of rock, and of mist. A strait strip of tapestry hung by each side of these narrow windows, like the single scanty tress by each cheek of an aged face. There were figures wrought in this tapestry; and as the breeze that came in with Hester stirred its folds, the figures nodded their heads, a moan went through the sash, and a shudder shook the dim panes of the windows.

There was a pleasant fire of turf alight in the grate. It made the dark corners glower, and the glasses on the pictures flash; and for the two black marble imps who carried the chimneypiece on their shoulders, it threw a lurid light of mischief into their eyes, making them wink at each other and grin till they seemed plotting to pull the walls about their ears.

But whatever else the fire did it gave Hester a cordial greeting. The door was shut in the passage, and it had her all to itself. It laughed in her face, it licked her hands, it stroked her head, and made murmurs over her. It approved and caressed her, it loved, and perhaps pitied her. It purred in her ear, "Cheer up, and don't cry!" It may also have meant, "You have come here to much trouble!" Hester only understood that it was a friend giving a welcome.

She untied the strings of her hat, and spread her hands before the fire. Those whispers heard in the passage still went rustling through her ears. Lady Humphrey had said well that Sir Archie was in danger. But these people did not know that he had a friend able and willing to protect him; still less could they imagine that she (Hester) was to be the instrument to be made use of by the saving hands of that friend. Now how strangely all other interests had grown trivial compared with this one. She thought but little of Janet Golden and her lover; she thought less of Lady Helen and her gowns.

A servant brought her dinner and a lighted lamp. After dinner she unpacked her desk, and set to work to write a letter to Lady Humphrey. The wind began to rumble round the tower, and to pipe, like an organ, in the chimney. The windows began to moan, and the faces on the tapestry to nod. Hester's first letter of tidings from Glenluce was getting written. A slim young person, in a pale woollen dress, with the lamplight making a glitter about her fair bent head. This was Hester, as a person might behold her from the doorway.

CHAPTER XV. VISITORS IN THE TOWER.

Hester had three lady visitors in her tower that night, and the first of the three was Janet Golden.

Miss Golden was dressing for dinner when she heard the wheels of a coach. Miss Golden was very pretty, as I think I have said before. She and her mirror were fully aware of this fact, and to-night they were taking note of it as usual.

Miss Golden was not a young lady to hear the wheels of a coach without going to the window to see further into the matter. She put her face to the pane, and saw Sir Archie alight. She kept her face to the pane, and saw Hester alight. She pressed her face to the pane, and saw Sir Archie leading Hester up his steps to his hall-door.

It seemed that Miss Janet did not like what she saw. She quarrelled with her maid, and dismissed her in a pet; and after this had been accomplished she made a rent in her handsome dinner-dress; and after this last had been effected, she sat down before her fire, and began to think.

That effort, to a young lady of fashion, was just as difficult in those days as in these. Janet hardly knew what vexed her, and could not task herself so far as to find out. She ought to have been glad to see Sir Archie coming home, and she was not glad. She was weary of her life at Glenluce, and yet she would not go away. She was longing to be back in London, and yet they talked of a wedding here. She was to be mistress in these glens, and she yawned at the dreary thought.

She had had a good resting time while Sir Archie was in London. She had been dull to be sure, but she could not avoid that. She had been neither so gay nor so ill-humoured as when Sir Archie had been at home. She had had some leisure to remember that there was something in the world which she had fancied, and had not got. She had had it between her fingers, and thrown it away. She had expected it would come back again, but it had not come as yet. In the hurry of her daily business at Glenluce—which was to tease Sir Archie Munro—she had formerly had no time to remember what she wanted. In his absence she had

gained leisure. And she had made such good use of her time that she could not see her way to forgetting, as before.

This Janet was, undoubtedly, a spoiled child of fortune. Luxury had been her nurse, her playfellow, her instructress. Her baby fingers had been amused by the whimsical distribution of many superfluous guineas. Gold had been a toy to her, and no one had ever thought it necessary to instruct her as to its value. She had always had so much that it seemed she had no need of any at all. She had not alone been saved from trouble in her own life, but she had never even come in contact with grief, suffering, or fear. Every one was thoughtful for her; every one was worshipful of her. Her hands were so full of everything that she could not stretch them forth to take hold of anything. There was nothing for her to choose, beyond the colour of a dress; there was nothing that she could dread, beyond the misfit of a boot. She had no need to check her tongue, for her impertinence was all wit: it were wrong to curb her temper, since her passions were only proof of a fine mettle. It were silly to seek for wisdom, since her follies were found charms; it were idle to mend her ignorance from books, since there were always people willing to tell her anything which she might happen to want to know. Her life was as full of boons as her jewel case of gems, and if she wanted to be thwarted she must quarrel with her shoestrings. The period of her days was like a box choked up with sugar-plums, all sweet, all smooth, all alike, all unwholesome.

There was just one little thing which she had wished to keep, and had lost. It had not been much to keep, she had thought, and so had been careless to hold it. It had not been a great deal to lose, she had said, when she found it had slipped away. How much she had missed it when it was gone she was far too proud ever to dream of acknowledging to herself.

She had had so many suitors it would have been a labour to her to count them. Of high degree, of low degree, of richer and of poorer, of younger and of older. And, if this thing which she had lost, which she regretted having lost, were the heart of a young, foolish, good-natured lover, what wonder that Miss Golden should feel dissatisfied with herself? It was as if some one overburthened with riches should stoop in search of a farthing. In addition to the discontentedness which had increased in her during his absence, Miss Golden was farther disturbed because Sir Archie had returned; for above all other people who came near her, Sir Archie had the knack of setting her world upside down.

Now, if these scraps of information as to Miss Golden's private feelings be considered most disjointed and unsatisfactory, it can only be said that in such respects they are the more like the young lady's thoughts.

Could it have been the seamstress whom he was waiting upon like that? Miss Janet was asking questions of herself or the steel bars of her glowing grate. They expected her to-night, and her room had been prepared. She claimed to be a lady. "I will go this moment and visit her, and see what she is like. And if it so happens she be the dressmaker, I'll give her a task at once."

A few moments after this valiant resolution had been come to, a tap fell on Hester's door: then the door was quickly opened, without pause for further ceremony, and Miss Janet made a very handsome picture in the doorway.

Her white velvet gown was half hanging from her waist; a brilliant scarlet shawl was twisted loosely round her shoulders. Her dark curls were gathered to the crown of her pretty head, and held there in a soft wreath by a glittering jewelled clasp. Her fair, saucy, satin-cheeked young face was held aloft with a sort of natural disdain. Her brown eyes were sparkling with an imperious curiosity.

Hester, thus caught in her first act of secresy, dropped her hands on the paper in a childish trepidation. So Janet saw her first, a look of fear in her up-turned eyes, hiding the letter she was writing with a guilty-looking impulse. Miss Golden noted the look and the gesture at the time, forgot about them afterwards, but later again remembered, when it might have been well she had still forgotten them.

"A sly little lackadaisy!" was Miss Janet's inward comment. "Beginning to write letters before she can well know where she is sitting. And hiding them up in a hurry, as if it were anybody's business but her own!"

Miss Janet had no reason for her ill-disposed feeling towards the young seamstress, except perhaps a general and undefined feeling that dressmakers had no business to be ladies. A humble sewing damsel with such an ambition should be checked. And if an enthusiastic nun like the Mother Augustine should encourage her, and if a philanthropic matron like Mrs. Hazeldean should be imposed upon, all this was no reason why a gentleman like Sir Archie should stoop to wait on her like a lacquey. But such being actually the case, it was high time some person of common sense, and a proper perception of the fitness of things, should step in and show the young woman her mistake. So Miss Janet just stepped in, with her rent dress in her hand.

"You are the new seamstress, I believe," she said, with a little supercilious hesitation. "May I trouble you to mend my dress?"

Hester, so appealed to, was at her post in a moment, her needle threaded, thimble on finger. her hand steady, her face composed. It was only when people were too good to her, or too thoughtful for her, that she was likely to lose her presence of mind. This splendid haughty young lady must be Pierce Humphrey's Janet Golden. And Hester, out of sympathy for the absent lover, set about the task of the mending with her fingers in their most dainty careful mood.

She stood close to Janet's shoulder, with her

hands among the folds of white velvet. It was an odd dress, but a handsome dress, she remarked, with her trained accuracy of judgment in such matters. And the wearer was an odd person, but a handsome person, she went on to observe, with the untrained accuracy of her natural instinct.

"She is taller than I am, and more beautiful," thought Janet, as Hester's drooping hair touched her own bare white shoulder. Miss Janet had an advantage over Hester, for in a long, dim, ghostly strip of mirror set in a wall she could see the striking contrast made by two girlish forms and faces.

"And her ancestors might have been princes when mine followed the plough!" continued Miss Janet, following a new idea through her very capricious mind.

The dress was mended; and adjusted on the wearer by Hester's hands. Then Miss Janet stood aloof, and regarded her gentle tirewoman.

"You shall come down to dinner with me," she said suddenly, much as she might have said, "you shall have a piece of cake," to a child. "Lady Helen will be quite content if I desire it. I will lend you a pretty gown. I will not have you mewed up here by yourself."

Miss Golden in this proposal need not be wondered at too much. Some people who knew her well would not have been surprised to hear her begging of a beggar to take a present of her purse, or ordering her milliner to make her a bonnet out a rainbow. She had an eye for beauty, and an instinct for breeding. She was a person who knew how to change her mind. She could give a blow and a kiss in the same breath.

"Thank you," said Hester, "but I have dined." And that was all she said. And this being so, Miss Janet retreated to the door in high amazement.

"Good night!" she said, "and thank you for your service." And then looking over her shoulder before she closed the door.

"And I hope, young woman," she said, "that you understand your business. If not, you will find little welcome here."

Hester had hardly got over the surprise of this first visit when some other knuckles came tapping on her door. The handle was turned again, and the Honourable Madge put in her head.

"So you are the dressmaker, my dear?" she said. "And a very charming young dressmaker I declare! Thirteen for dinner they said, and I would not go down for the world. And dear Archie just come home, and my cherry tabinet quite wasted!"

And she stroked down her dress.

"Just what I was at her age!" she said, seizing Hester's hand, and holding her a little off, scanning her up and down with half-closed eyes. "But time will make havoc." And she swayed herself to and fro, lifted her hand to feel that the likeness of her lover was in its place upon her forehead, and looked askance at the fire, with a half-sad, half-bitter little smile.

"You will excuse me, my dear, if I poke your fire?" And she made a little frisk towards the hearth. "The night is so cold, and you look such a sociable young person!"

Hester placed her a chair, and fetched her a footstool, and then, at her bidding, sat facing her by the fender.

"What is the news from the world, my dear?" she said, dropping her voice and looking cautiously round her. "They do tell such tales of the times. But Lady Helen don't allow any newspapers to come in. And Sir Archie is as close as an oyster. He laughs and says, 'I will not let them cut off your head, Cousin Madge.' (The Honourable Madge, my dear, to strangers.) So I said to myself, 'Our new dressmaker will have no scruples about telling me the truth.'"

"I know far less than you do, I am sure," said Hester, fearfully. "I have come straight from London, and I was shut up in a steamer or a coach all the way. In Dublin, at night there was a crowd in the streets. They said some one was being taken to prison. It was terrible, the crowd was so quiet."

"Ah, ah!" said Miss Madge, nodding her head, "better did they shout and roar. And hist! my dear—what is your name? Hester! Excuse the Christian name. It is so much more comfortable between friends. I call myself Madge, the Honourable Madge. Ah!"

"This country is safe, is it not?" ventured Hester.

"Safe!" echoed Miss Madge, with a terrible little laugh. "Vesuvius, my dear, must be a nice safe place to live upon till the volcano begins to spout fire. Any night we may be hanged from our bed-posts."

Hester shuddered and drew nearer to the cherry tabinet.

"Or burned in our beds," said the Honourable Madge. "But that is no reason why we should have our dresses made unfashionably in the mean time. And I came here chiefly to compliment you on your dolls. Poor dolls would be burned, too, of course."

"But, madam," pleaded Hester, "please pardon me if I ask you, does not Sir Archie Munro discountenance the disturbances? He does not concern himself with the troubles?"

"Don't he?" cried the Honourable Madge, giving her head a toss, and snapping her fingers. "It may be that he don't. He may or he may not. If I were a man I should, I can tell you, that's all. I would lead out my clan to do battle!"

And the Honourable Madge grasped the poker, and made a fierce little flourish with it in the air.

"Look in there," she said again, stabbing the fire, and making the red cinders drop about. "Does it not look like rows of houses burning? La, my dear, don't turn so pale. And I wanted so much to speak to you about my new pink silk. Well, I'll bring it you in the morning."

And soon after this she pirouetted towards

the door, pointed her toes in her long sandalled slippers, kissed hands to Hester, and disappeared.

It was a very pale face that was raised in expectation when the third knock fell on Hester's door.

"Come in," said Hester, all her weariness and fearfulness in her voice.

"Have I come too soon?" asked Mrs. Hazeldean, advancing out of the shadows with two outstretched hands, "I ought to have let you rest. Have I come too soon?"

Fools rush in where angels fear to tread. But Hester did not announce that she had had two visitors already. She only said "no" in thorough earnest; finding her fingers covered up in the clasp of two warm hands; letting her eyes take their delight in this new comer's rare face.

TYRANNY OF ART.

I, a wounded worm, am about to try turning, to see whether I can by any means wriggle out of my present abject condition, though, alas! a morbid development of the bump of veneration renders the hope a faint one. The first person singular is made use of in deference to the feelings of fellow-victims; but I am a representative man, and my class is a large one. Nature intended me to be happy, for she endowed me with a variety of tastes and a great capacity for enjoyment; but man has set up a number of artificial standards to which I am incapable of attaining, and this spoils my pleasure. Some of us are wise enough to take a line of their own and indulge their fancies, quite indifferent to the sneers or sermons of their kind; but as a rule we are dreadfully anxious to be in order, and to regulate our likes and dislikes in accordance with the dictates of acknowledged masters. We are diffident, subservient to authority, anxious to conciliate the cognoscenti; but we never get anything from them but contumely, which is most depressing. Persons of one taste wear its channel deep; I have many tastes and they are naturally all shallow. If I had no taste at all I might be esteemed, whereas each of my one-tasted acquaintances looks upon my feeble and partial admiration as a degradation to the art which he professes. When a man puts on a certain ineffable smile, accompanied with an elevation of the eyebrows and a slight shake of the head, I know what he is going to do; he is going to quote the only complete couplet of Pope that he knows.

> A little knowledge is a dangerous thing,
> Drink deep or taste not the Pierian spring.

Very mellifluous; but how is a man to get a large lump of knowledge all at once? Surely he must begin with a little. If knowledge be a good thing, a little of it must be better than none. Besides, if you come to that, what is a little, and what is much? At what point in our educational voyage may we hope that we are past the mysterious shoals where danger lies? Then it is easy to say, "drink deep;" but Nature has denied me a capacious swallow or a strong head, and I protest against the supercilious cruelty which would grudge me the little sip which quenches my inferior thirst.

Why should Maule, my painting friend, rail at me so bitterly? It does not even appease him that I admire his own pictures, because it seems that the real merits are invisible to me, and that what gives me pleasure in them is of no artistic value. If I did not care for pictures at all, he would pity me merely; but that which excites his wrath and scorn is, that I get almost as much pleasure out of the minor beauties as he does out of the higher. He came upon me one day in the South Kensington Museum, gloating over one of Ward's pigs, and was not angry with me, "For you understand a good pig, I dare say;" he condescendingly remarked. But I thought he would have gone stark staring mad with me on another occasion for presuming to enjoy a landscape of Turner's. I did not know it was a Turner; it was a painting which took hold of my imagination. I did not know why. There was a haze in the atmosphere which recalled all the most beautiful real sunrises and sunsets I had ever seen; and the longer I looked, the more powerful was the effect produced upon me. So I looked on, and got my soul into the picture, as it were, until I seemed to be wandering and exploring, like a gamboge spirit, about that waste of water, cloud, and mountain, when Maule burst upon me.

"A fellow like you, who has read bits of Ruskin without the slightest notion of what he means, hears that a picture is Turner's, and affects to understand it! Why, I tell you it is impossible you can like that picture." I explained humbly that I did not know who painted it, or I would not have presumed. "Presumed!" cried he: "why you have been gazing at it like a man in a dream for half an hour!"

"I beg pardon; I *was* in a sort of dream," I replied. "I meant no harm, but Claudes and Turners have that effect upon me, somehow."

"Ignorant admiration like that is downright profanation," growled my friend; "such works ought not to be exposed to the vulgar gaze."

It would be very nice to understand some of the principles upon which good pictures are distinguished from bad pictures. I have been through heaps and heaps of foreign churches and picture galleries, but I am ashamed to say that I could very seldom manage to extract the slightest pleasure from saints, martyrs, holy families, or the secular or mythological works of the most famous masters. Every now and then, indeed, I have been repaid for any amount of boredom. I do believe that I could go into Antwerp cathedral and gaze upon that Descent from the Cross, day after day, for months, without getting tired of it. It seems to me an inspiration, a miraculous picture.

Without understanding why, the first glance at it told me that the painter was a genius; a man the hem of whose garment one would be proud to touch; something far superior to ordinary humanity; a demigod. And yet I have often looked at Rubens's picture in the Louvre, and at our own Rape of the Sabines, and it would never have occurred to me (if I had not been told), that the painter was a great master. Yet Maule tells me that if I admired the real beauties of the Descent, I could not fail to see those of all other Rubenses; while to me it seems utterly incredible that the two Rubenses I have mentioned should have been painted by the same man. It is evident that a great picture has a double power of pleasing, one appreciable only by the cognoscenti, the other adapted to the comprehension of the vulgar; and why should we not enjoy what has been provided for the gratification of our coarser tastes?

Then there is sculpture. Why should not people be allowed to like marble drapery? Why tell them that the effect of a veiled figure is produced by a mere trick, and that they must not admire it? The poor honest folks have been yawning over naked stone men and women—trying to see the ideal—all their lives, and have failed. Statues have pleased them in a conservatory, because the gleaming white has brought out the green of the orange-trees, but in no other manner. And then they go to Windsor chapel and see the group to the memory of the Princess Charlotte; or they come across some such composition as the Reading Girl, and for the first time get hold of a bit of sculpture they can comprehend, and which gives them real pleasure. Short-lived is their triumph. Some blow-fly of an art-critic is certain to taint their enjoyment. "Pretty in its way. A piece of mechanical work carefully executed; but, my dear fellow, that is not *Art*." Well, but what is? The Laocoon, doubtless. What percentage of educated travellers can derive pleasure from looking at that? Perhaps if we had casts of works of art which we can understand, dispersed more generally throughout our public gardens and institutions, we might, in a few generations, be educated up to the higher branches. At present, with very few exceptions, the English people are in the position of a boy attending a lecture on mechanics who has not read algebra.

People, again, who admire the most intellectual poetry, never will allow those who prefer an inferior style to rest in peace. It was a common custom some years ago, and may be still, for debating societies to argue upon Byron's pretensions to be called a poet. Yet that was in the true spirit of the Art Tyrant. Thousands of Byron's fellow countrymen might find an artistic want satisfied by his poetry; they never cared for Milton or Pope; they never thought they liked poetry at all, until Byron came in their way, and suited them. Now, because another order of poetry suits the critic better, why should he spoil the only intellectual delight the Byron lovers have, by perpetually uncovering their idol's clay feet? They listen to the troublesome critic because he is cleverer and better up in the subject than they are, and he abuses his power. The critic himself probably thought Lara the noblest effort of poetical genius in the language, when he was seventeen. If his taste prefer at a later period Shelley, Keats, Wordsworth, Browning, or Tennyson, that is no reason for turning up his nose at his old friend.

But musical tyrants are the worst tyrants, and their slaves are beyond measure the most numerous. Almost every young lady learns music, and a very large number of young men who are fond of the society of young ladies, study it too, in order to ingratiate themselves. All these people might receive pleasure instead of pain from their pursuits, if it were not for the Art Tyranny which forces them to neglect what they like, for something else which a conventional rule asserts that they ought to like. No doubt a man with a refined classical taste gets a very high and intense pleasure out of classical music; but then the ear he has been blessed with, is a very different organ to the ears of the unhappy thousands of his slaves and imitators, who are too vain to own the inferiority of their drums. For me, I own fairly that I loathe good music. I wish I liked it; I wish I liked everything. But I don't like it.

As for talking in a depreciatory tone of that which is too high for my attainment, I repudiate such vain folly, which is the affectation of ignorance. The fact is a sad one, that I am so utterly devoid of musical taste, that if I modestly allude to a favourite tune or performer, my classical friends laugh scornfully. And yet a cunning violin or violoncello player can draw the tears to my eyes; some combinations of sounds fill me with awe; others make me long to dance or sing; others to fight; others plunge me into melancholy but pleasing reveries of the past. But nothing which the tyrant artists admit to be music, has this effect upon me; only what they condemn as trash. The Christy Minstrels raise me to paradise; a Sonata in F sends me to the antipodes thereof. Home, Sweet Home, is charming; but the variations upon it excite within me the germs of a canine howl. Why am I a degraded wretch because my drums are so organised? Do not call what I like to listen to, music; call it sweet sound; only let me have it in peace, and do not attempt to force upon me what gives me pain in place of what affords me the keenest pleasure. When I heard Mademoiselle Schneider sing Dites lui, I was distracted by conflicting desires to worship her, eat her, and hear her go on for ever. Offenbach, whom the Art Tyrants would roast at a slow fire if they could, has supplied a want in my life; I feel a personal gratitude to the man who has given me such true and lasting pleasure. Lasting, because in hours of weariness and depression his airs

come back upon my memory, revive and cheer me. Of course if the conventional idea that there is a higher musical law, up to which anybody who is capable of deriving pleasure from sweet sounds at all, can be educated, be correct, I am worthy of blame rather than compassion. This remonstrance is put forward in the belief that myriads of people who enjoy pretty airs could never, with any amount of practice, learn to like classical music; to them The Last Rose of Summer would always be delightful, and Thalberg's variations upon it unmeaning noise. I contend that a man can no more give himself a fine ear, than a long sight. But he can do this: he can believe in the tyrants who would raise his taste, and can learn to despise and relinquish what gave him real delight; he can drop the substance of sweet sound and pursue a musical shadow, and be bored by concerts for the rest of his life. And thousands do it. Let us have classical music, and sweetnoiseical entertainments, and live in harmony.

LEAVES FROM THE MAHOGANY TREE.

TABLE FURNITURE (CHINA, GLASS, &C.).

We have before us while we write, two things: a portfolio of photographs: and that simple, useful, but not very beautiful object, a balanced ivory-handled Sheffield dinner-knife. The steel is good, the blade is constructed on sensible principles, being capable of receiving a fine edge, and being thicker on the back than on the front, and thicker at the bottom than the top; but in point of beauty of form, the implement might be made by a Bosjesman. Nor is this Sheffield dinner-knife altogether framed after even the severest common sense, for it is rounded at the top as if it were intended for a lunatic asylum, and, moreover, the binding of the handle is put on in such a way that it harbours cleaning sand and dust: while the letters of the maker's name, stamped unwisely at the bottom of the blade, also receive their share of the grit and blackness of the knife-board.

Now, this knife in the eyes of a jury of æsthetic epicureans stands arraigned as grossly deficient in several essential points, and its deficiencies represent the great wants of our modern commercial art productions.

The prisoner at the bar—the table-knife of Sheffield—as part of the furniture of our dinner-tables, does not satisfy our craving for the beautiful, nor does it meet the requirement of our less exacting common sense. At the table of a man of taste, everything, even the simplest, should be sensibly adapted to its purpose, and should also be beautiful to the eye. It is no reason, because knives are cheap, and are thrown out by thousands from Sheffield warehouses, that they should be senseless in shape, and ugly in form. It is not impossible to unite the useful and the beautiful. The modest vases of Etruria were beautiful, and the penny lamps of Pompeii were as exquisite in shape as they were judicious in structure. The Sheffield manufacturer may be indifferent himself to beauty of form or ornament; but that is no reason why he should refuse to meet the demands of the people of taste. He might at least make his knives useful; yet to be useful, a dinner knife should be sharp at the point, because it is not merely the carver who has to sever drumsticks, and penetrate between the interstices of joints.

"But when *were* such things as dinner-knives beautiful?" asks Mr. Sheffield. What can a dinner-knife be, but a steel blade thrust into a square or a round handle? Our answers are ready filed and docketted at our elbow. They are here in our portfolio of photographs from the antiquarian collection of that very practical virtuoso, the great shipbuilder, Robert Napier, Esq. We see before us, photographs of knives, forks, and spoons of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (that is from the reigns of Henry the Eighth to that of Charles the Second), of many countries, but chiefly Italy, France, Germany, and England. They are all beautiful, and are all works of art, though some of them are of such rude materials as box-wood and maple wood. Our first photograph is of a rich crystal fork-spoon, mounted in silver gilt. It perhaps indicates the origin of the fork: a spoon sawn into long teeth, so as in some degree to unite the two purposes of the flesh fork and the spoon. By-the-by there can be no doubt that the rounded top of the dinner knife is a convention dating back to the Queen Anne times, and earlier, when even well-bred people ate with their knives. A page or two further on we find a fork (date 1552, but there is no doubt that forks were used in Italy even at the beginning of the sixteenth century) with an exquisite steel handle embellished with busts of negroes and floriated scrolls. It is contained in an elaborately carved boxwood case, mounted with silver. People carried about their knives and forks then; and at London ordinaries in Fleet-street or near St. Paul's, gallants like Gratiano and Mercutio, fresh from their Venetian tour, would produce such forks from their perfumed doublets, to the wonder, disgust, and amusement of untravelled men. The next example we take up is still more admirable and it comes, indeed, from a skilful hand. It is a Flemish knife handle of the seventeenth century, surmounted by groups of Amorini (the Amorini are pretty allegorical creatures of the Cupid family). It is not only delightful to look at, but it furnishes an excellent grip, and is with reasonable care imperishable. Then we come to a Dutch knife-handle, in boxwood, of the seventeenth century, carved with scriptural subjects in oval medallions; next, to a knife and fork (seventeenth century) with handles of tulips, leaves, and Cupids; next, to a German one with animals gnawing and tearing each other; next, to a Cinque-Cento spoon, with masks, cornucopias, and acanthus leaves; next, to a fine silver knife-handle with niello flowers; lastly, to ivory spoons used by poor mendicant friars of taste, who were forbidden silver. The handles are beautifully carved with little crisp quaint

male and female figures seated underneath a tree. In these matters, then, it really seems we have less taste than the men of the seventeenth century, who could not discover steam, and who never saw a cotton mill in full work.

The phantom voice from Sheffield answers: "Well, they are beautiful; but, Heaven bless your imperfect vision, those knives were individual works of art, and cost gold! They could not throw them out as we do, ten thousand a day." "Granted, fair sir; that is exactly what we are driving at. It is individuality and intellectual work that we want to see on our dinner-tables, and the more of it the better. This very work, reduced gentlewomen and mechanics of talent and originality could produce, and would enjoy producing, thanks to our schools of art, at no very tremendous cost. They would be sure of a good market too."

Apostle spoons are especial favourites of ours. The shape is a sensible one. We sometimes want to sip out of a spoon, not to thrust it bodily into our mouths; besides, a spoon handle adapts itself naturally to purposes of ornamentation. We have a photograph by our side, with a fine German example of the sixteenth century. The bowl is engraved with floral scrolls, and on the stem is a plump little Bacchus bestriding a barrel, and holding a cup and grapes.

Let us pass on to another branch of table furniture—epergnes. The present stereotyped masses of silver vases on palm-trees, or rocks and figures, satisfy no one who knows what good art is. They are unmeaning and conventional; see one, you see all; they are redeemed only by the piles of crimson flushed azaleas and green drooping ferns which adorn them. Far better buy a rare old piece of Palissy, and introduce your flowers on either side of it, or in it, if it be a ewer, a vase, or a small fountain, of that wonderful man's work. It is good to think of such a man, of his heroism and struggles through the rain of contempt and the storms of envy, despised, mocked, contemned, until at last, when he had broken up his very bed and chairs, to feed his greedy and pitiless furnaces, the mould opened and disclosed the secret of new beauty. We turn to some Toulouse photographs for an example of Palissy work that would do for a central epergne at a modern dinner-table, and we almost instantly find one—beautiful in design, rich in ever-glowing colours, original in character, and a chef d'œuvre of the great potter of the sixteenth century. It is a vase about eleven inches high, grounded with that dark-blue transparent enamel in which Palissy delighted. It is indigo without its opaqueness, the early twilight hue of an Italian sky. The body of the vase (the drum as it is technically called) bears on each side a cartouche, with on one side a river nymph reclining, on the other the goddess Flora. Finely modelled masks—it is supposed from the hand of the great sculptor Jean Goujon, who was cruelly shot during the massacre of St. Bartholomew, while at work on a scaffold at the Louvre—occupy the spaces under the spout and the handle; and the intervening spaces are filled with scroll foliage. The sweeping curve of the handle is adorned with a female figure, full of poetry and grace, holding a cornucopia, which twines into the scroll of the handle. Below the spout, is a spirited large grotesque masque, and at the base are raised gadroons.

Now, this is an epergne worthy the table of a gourmet of thought, refinement, and taste; one who wants his eyes, between the courses and during the lulls of talking, to rest, not on mere silver plate and tame conventional figures, but on a production of mind. "But," a melancholy voice of scepticism replies: "but you have selected one of the masterpieces of the pottery of the world; how are men of moderate means to obtain such masterpieces?" Our reply is, that fine bits of Palissy, fit for such purposes, though inferior to the example selected, are easily obtainable if a man have taste and patience.

If we were lucky enough to get a good bit of Palissy ware, well modelled, richly coloured, pleasant to the eye, and suggestive to the mind, we would try and also get a certain number of Palissy fruit and preserve dishes to match. These would not only have more individuality than Dresden or Worcester china, but the relievi would be sharper, the tints purer, the design less hackneyed, and the enamel colours and glaze more brilliant. The gay fruit will show all the pleasanter when contrasting with the deep indigo blues and chocolate browns of the French ware. If we had the choice, we would specially select those curious dishes, with rivulets in the centre, and shells and fish, spotted trout and lizards, frogs or efts, all round. Palissy used to search for these creatures in the ponds, brooks, and hazel coverts, round Fontainebleau; and they always show his patient love of nature, his industry, and his skill. He observed their colours, and reproduced them with most laborious care. The olive-green tints of a tench, the golden orange of a perch, the emerald armour of the lizard, the low-toned greenish greys of a miller's thumb—he took note of them all, and toiled at the furnace mouth until the stubborn clay glowed with the transmitted dyes. These Palissy dishes are quaint, but they are never repulsive, and, half hidden with fruit and vine leaves, would just sufficiently attract and rouse the attention, without too much occupying it. We have before us, photographs of two such dishes—the one has a translucent brook flowing round the bottom, while on an island in the centre are fish, shells, and pebbles. On the broad sloping bank of the margin, crawl one or two lizards; there, also lurk a coiled-up snake and a frog. The plants the artist has moulded, are ferns, ivy, oak leaves, and acorns.

In the second dish, the central island is studded with cockle shells, which are surrounded by a circle of small univalves. At each end is a large frog. In the circular rivulet disport a pike, two carp, and a miller's thumb: while on the raised border, artfully grouped, are two large lizards, two crayfish, a

frog, and a death's head moth, besides leaves and shells. Now, these objects coarsely executed and awkwardly placed by a dull workman, with no heart in his business, would be simply detestable. They would be stupid assertions of natural facts and so many incongruous and sometimes repelling objects stuck on a piece of pottery; but they are not so in Palissy's work. There, they come like glimpses of outer-world nature, and we seem when using his ware to be taking our fruit and conserves under the sunny green trees of a Boccaccio garden. The chief objection to using Palissy is that it is so precious, and so fragile, and it would be dangerous to entrust it to servants. We grant this, and we would remove this danger by mounting the Palissy plates in copper, and rendering their breakage almost impossible.

Men of fortune we would advise, when possible, to return, for dinner and dessert services, to some of those fine old styles of pottery that never can become obsolete. For instance, if Palissy appear to them too quaint, let them use Majolica. Many of our readers, not versed in antiquities, may not know the story of Majolica. It is a ware originally made by the Moors when they occupied Majorca, and it was exported into Italy from thence and from the potteries of the Spanish Arabs. About the middle of the fifteenth century, the Italians, probably aided by Italian workmen, began to make this beautiful ware for themselves, and soon the manufactories of Faenza, Urbino, Castel-Durante, Gubbio, and Pesaro, became eminent for these iridescent plates—for which it was long supposed, in England, that Raphael, when young, had drawn designs. In due course, thanks to the patronage of the Italian princes, a great man arose, one Maestro Giorgio, a gentleman of Pavia, who about 1498 came to Gubbio, and either bought or succeeded to a manufactory that had the monopoly of the famed ruby lustre, the secret of which is now lost. Maestro Giorgio improved the yellow lustre into the golden, and purified the ruby from its previous orange tone. There is no discovering when ware like this was first made. It was probably one of the primeval discoveries. Mr. Layard found white enamelled pottery with lustre designs ten or twelve feet under the surface of ruins at Khorsabad.

These Majolica plates and dishes are often adorned with copies of Raphael's designs or fragments from Marc Antonio. Often they are what is called "amatoria," or love offerings. One, before us now, has an Amorino upon it, holding an eel which is sliding through his fingers, and the motto is, "Così fugge la vita nostra"—"So flies our life." In another there is a female bust portrait in profile, with a motto, "Chi a tempo non dorma." On the lady's sleeve is the device of a burning heart bound round with a cord, the whole executed entirely in ruby lustre, with blue outline and shading. Often in the centre of these plates Andromeda cries to Heaven from her rocky prison, or Mutius Scævola thrusts his bold hand into the flames. In the early periods, the yellow lustre, though dull in colour, has an extraordinary mother-of-pearl iridescence which is exquisitely beautiful. On these lovers' offerings—costly valentines of the sixteenth century—the usual emblems are the old common-place hearts pierced with daggers and darts. The arms of Urbino often appear upon them (these pieces of painted clay have survived the lovers and the princes who caused them to be made), and often they literally glow with ducal coronets, arabesques, warring dragons, intertwined serpents, sphinxes, masks, military and musical trophies, garlands, and inscribed cartouches, all radiant with gold and flame colour. After such ware as this, our common dinner-plates, with blue and maroon edges and a coat of arms or crest in the centre, or maybe a bunch of flowers or a timid landscape, appear very mean and pitiful.

And now we come to glass, which can never be too thin or too tasteful. Claret and Burgundy should be drunk out of air bubbles, if possible; while, on the contrary, ale should be brought round in massive silver-lidded jugs of grey Flemish stoneware. All wealthy men who are collectors we would advise, if they have Venetian glass, to use it—if not, at least to decorate with it safe places round the epergne. Most of our readers have seen Venetian glass of the sixteenth century, though some, perhaps, have not given it much attention. Let us recapitulate a few of its beauties and its claims as an art-decoration for the dinner-tables of men of taste.

It is supposed that old Venetian glass was partly an imitation of antique examples, and partly an imitation of the enamelled glass of the East. They seldom cut it on the wheel, but obtained its extreme tenacity and beautiful curves by blowing only. It is generally allowed that Venetian glass evinces greater originality and beauty of form than any we can now make. The skill of the Italian workmen of Henry the Eighth and Elizabeth's reign seems little short of miraculous. No wonder that that old Italian goblet, "The Luck of Eden Hall," was supposed to be the work of fairies! Some old Venetian glasses have, in the long slender columns of their transparent stems, cross threads of an opaque milk-white colour (Latticineo). These, twine like the roots of hyacinth bulbs through their transparent prison, as if they were growing tendrils. Often, this network of white threads is crossed into a lattice or lace-work pattern (Vitro di Trino), and between each lozenge a little shining air bubble has been artfully left.

Then there is the Millefiori (thousand flowers), when the glass is richly variegated with stars, circles, and other geometric fantasies, produced by mingling small cylindrical pieces of various coloured filigree glass, cut from thin rods, with the colourless melted glass of the mass. The Schmelze, too, is beautiful, with its agate-like colours, variegated brown, green, or blue, which, when seen by transmitted light, assume a deep blood-red tinge. Last, but most beauti-

ful of all, we must mention the Schmelze-avanturine, when patches or globules of gold vein the blue and brown surface of the Schmelze, while in the Avanturine, in the melted glass of which levigated leaf gold or metallic filings have been mixed, sparkles of gold are suspended in the glass. Sometimes, Venetian glass is of a smoky brown, or has a blackish tinge, which connoisseurs admire as they do the coffee-colour of old lace. The latter glass has often the fillets, margins, or entire stems, coloured; or it is decorated with bands and fillets of imbricated work in gold, pearl, or jewel enamel. Not unfrequently, a shield of arms is enamelled in the centre of the bowl of the tazza, or there are medallions of classical subjects. We have seen Venetian glass frosted; now and then it takes the vivacious form of a ship, rigging, masts, and all complete; we have seen it spring into leaping chimeras, dragons, and winged monsters.

There were no bounds to the vigorous and original genius of those old glass-workers in that beautiful city by the sea. They enchanted the glass; they made their wine-glasses like nautilus shells, with wings of blue. We remember a lobster with blue claws, glasses with syphons inside the bowls, and tiny stems crocketted all the way up with little coloured ornamental spikes, and red and white flowers in the stem. Such glasses are sometimes, but not always, fragile, and they might often be brought on by the host himself for Tokay, or any specially rare wine. After having been used, admired, and discussed, they might be removed to a place of safety, and next day washed by the lady of the house with her own fair hands.

At the end of the second course, a certain luxurious alderman used always to call for "a cold chair," and upon that fell to at the feast with renewed vigour. Now, there is much more to be said about chairs than we have room to say. The Voltaire chair, the curule chair, the old Venetian chair, the pseudo-classical chair of the First Consulate, with gilt legs; the old splay-legged Queen Anne chair, the wide-backed Molière chair; all have their admirers; but they are nearly all deficient in some one or more essentials of beauty and comfort. Some have not back enough, some have too much, some feel insecure, others are too cumbrous. A good dining-room chair should be portable and yet substantial; the seat neither too soft nor too hard; the back firm and supporting; it should move on casters, so as to roll quickly and without labour. There should be no hard wooden ornaments at the back to cut one's coat and hurt one's spinal vertebræ. It should be graceful in form and yet also cozy. Away with the old conventions of upholsterers, the absurd lions' feet, the wearisome leg ornaments, the everlasting acanthus leaves! Can no fresh type be invented?

Table linen should always be studied. Nothing can be better of its kind than the old Dutch linen, with quaint figures of the old Duke of Marlborough sort of generals, worked in a shade of white that only shows in certain lights.

We want more mind about our table furniture. If we must have few ideas, let them be repetitions of some fine type, like the Greek chair, the Greek tripod lamp, or the Greek amphora—let them be at least repetitions of beauty, not of dulness and ugliness. By all means use fine works of antiquity when practicable. The beautiful always assimilates, and Palissy and Majolica dishes would not lose, even by contrast with Sèvres plates. Buy harlequin suits; the variety is always pleasant. Designs from Raphael are more intellectual than barbaric wealth of mere gold or silver plate. Besides, metal is not pleasant to eat off. What we want in England is, not to produce a few masterpieces of art every year, but a better average of the ordinarily manufactured art articles. Mr. Cole did good work in this direction, but there is a vast deal still to do before a man of taste of the present day can dine surrounded by plates, cups, dishes, and glasses of beautiful shape and colour.

This deficiency ought not to exist. Our wealth is great, and our countrymen who have taste as well as means are numerous. The demand for tasteful table furniture is great. If our workmen cannot invent, let them imitate. In the fifteenth century, men had time to think, and patience to execute—they had love for their work, and spared no labour in thinking it out. Labour costs more now, but there are plenty who will pay labour. If material be dear, there are plenty who can afford to buy material. But there must be far more education of the eye, or people will still abound who will wish for nothing more beautiful than willow plates, stucco cornices, and tea-tray landscapes.

AT A LITTLE DINNER-PARTY.

First Old Humbug.

Dear brother Brown, if we could take,
  Such liberty with Time,
As just to back his fatal clock
  To mark our early prime.
When we were barely twenty-three,
  And prodigal of Youth,
And thought all women were divine,
  All men the souls of truth:—
If we could feel as then we felt,
  And know what now we know,
We'd take more pleasure than we did,
  Twice twenty years ago.

Second Old Humbug.

Dear Brother Smith, I'm not so sure,
  'Tis heart that keeps us young,
And heart was ever ignorant,
  Since Eve and Adam sprung.
And if we knew in youthful days
  As much as when we're old,
I fear that heart would turn to stone,
  And blood run very cold.
Yet none the less, for sake of life,
  Though life should bring me woe,
I'd gladly be the fool I was
  Twice twenty years ago.

THIRD OLD HUMBUG.

Dear Smith and Brown, of parted hours
Your talk is void and vain,
They're gone—God wot! Let's bless our lot!
They cannot come again.
Each age has its appointed joy,
And each its heavy load,
And I for one would not retrace
My footsteps on the road.
I know no Time, but present Time,
And if the claret flow—
And we enjoy it—why recall
Twice twenty years ago?

I know I've had my share of joy,
I know I've suffered long,
I know I've tried to do the right,
Although I've done the wrong.
I know 'mid all my pleasures past,
That sleep has been the best,
And that I'm weary, very weary,
And soon shall be at rest.
Yet all the same I cling to life,
"To be" is all I know,
And if I'm right, I knew no more,
Twice twenty years ago.

THE YOUNG HUMBUG.

You dear old humbugs, Jones and Smith,
Thou dear old humbug, Brown,
You live like oysters, though not half
So useful to the town.
I'll lead a nobler life than yours,
While yet my youth remains,
And gather up a store of gold
To heal old Age's pains.
You've had your pleasures as you went
In driblets small and thin,
I'll have my pleasures in the lump,
And end where you begin.

I'll carve and care, I'll stint and spare,
And heap up sum on sum,
To make myself a millionnaire
Before old Age shall come.
I'll flaunt the rich, I'll feed the poor,
And on the scroll of Fame,
So large that all the world may read,
I'll write my honest name!

CHORUS OF OLD HUMBUGS.

Yes! Fool! and when you're old as we,
You'll find, on verge of death,
That little pleasures are the best,
And Fame—not worth a breath.

IN SEVILLE.

I WAS in Seville a few weeks ago, when Isabella still was Queen. A traveller's first impression in Seville is that of being perpetually stared at. In the streets, at the theatres, in the churches, at the Mesa rodonda (table d'hôte), it is all the same. Spanish politeness seems to have gone the way of Spanish debentures; a stranger who is inclined for a lounge will attract about the same amount of respectful attention as a giraffe taking the air in the Strand. A good wholesome English beard is the thing of all others to excite wrath; it would be less conspicuous, perhaps, to wear a tail. The full-grown beard of Britain is too nearly allied to the Moorish or Israelitish appendage to be tolerated by orthodox believers, who shave off the whiskers, and trim the hair on the chin to a fine Vandyke point. An Englishman with a white beard was not long ago pelted in one of the squares of Seville. That city is very sensitive also on the subject of bonnets, or ladies' hats. It would be about as safe to wear a Moorish turban. Probably, it is only intended as a tribute of respect to the national Mantilla, that fashionably dressed young men stand still and laugh aloud, as an English lady passes by.

Whether the tired traveller will sleep at night in Seville, depends upon the view he may take of street noises. If he has gone through a preparatory course of having chain-cables hauled over his berth on board ship, he may possibly be soothed to rest by mule-bells, which are like tin-kettles with stones in them, and the rattle whereof is incessant. Mellowed by the distance of a mile or so, the sound may have a charm; but it certainly is not to be discovered when it is continued all night immediately under your bedroom window.

The watchmen too, are very obliging. They prowl about with halberds and lanterns, and insist upon telling you the time every half-hour, accompanying their intimation by a prolonged howl, which is supposed to be "Ave Maria purissima," and so on. By about three A.M. the church bells are stirring. These instruments of torture are suspended to a beam which revolves on pivots, and the bell is pushed by a man, like a swing, and turns over and over, ringing as it goes. So, between mule-bells on the earth, and church bells in the sky, the traveller may improve his sleepless nights by extending his acquaintance with campanology.

If the people of Seville be dirty, it is their own fault, for the town abounds in excellent and well arranged baths. The only difficulty is in getting the water cold. You state your wishes, the attendant shrugs his shoulders and, while your back is turned, secretly lets a quantity of hot water in, under the impression that you are mad, and that no created constitution could survive the shock of a cold bath.

A visit to the correo, or post-office, for the purpose of despatching a foreign letter, is rather an exhilirating operation. A knock at the inquiry window produces a lean and smoke-dried individual, who, on learning the destination of the letter, explains how much the postage will amount to. The window in question is barred with a close iron grating, and the general air of the place is that of a rather disreputable prison. If the window bars are intended as a precaution against felony, they would seem superfluous, for a comprehensive view of the interior reveals nothing to steal, except the hungry-looking clerk himself, and an enormous deal counter. The next process is to ascertain that the letter does not exceed the

prescribed weight. This is done by slowly depositing it in a pair of scales large enough to try a jockey's weight at Epsom. The destination and weight of the letter having been ascertained, the next thing is to get stamps for the requisite amount; but this is rather a complicated business. The post-office does not sell stamps, so the hungry clerk explains in pantomime—for the traveller's Spanish is not up to conversation mark—and points in a distracted way towards the cigar he is smoking. The good-natured traveller, thinking that the official in question might be seized with a sudden frenzy for tobacco, makes a polite tender of his cigar-case. A cigar is accepted, but still the stamps are not forthcoming. A gloomy suspicion crosses the traveller's mind that the clerk is mad, so he goes back to his hotel and consults a waiter, who explains that the object of all the pantomime was to refer the traveller to a tobacconist's shop, since it is to that particular branch of trade that a paternal government has entrusted the privilege of selling postage stamps. If this arrangement causes a little trouble, it is not without its direct advantage to the revenue, for tobacco is a royal monopoly, and, as a man who buys a stamp, may, in the process of negotiation deem it advisable to buy a cigar too, this innocent little device is productive of benefit to the ruling powers. On arriving at the shop, the traveller is confronted by a solemn man in a mulberry cloak and black turban hat. The customer's wants are politely explained, and the old gentleman gruffly desires to see the letter. He first poises it upon a pair of very dirty fingers, and then with a growing sense of responsibility, weighs it in some snuffy scales. This operation concluded, he finds it necessary to light a fresh cigar. He next adjusts his spectacles and struggles manfully through every word of the address. This done, he turns the letter over and over, either in a sort of forlorn hope of getting at the inside, or with the more innocent intention of disposing of a little of his spare time, and maybe driving his customer to take refuge in cigars. He then dives into the inmost recesses of a drawer, and very slowly, and, to all appearance reluctantly, produces a stamp. Off the traveller goes in triumph with his letter to the post-office. It is sure to be all right now: but no. The old gentleman has given you a wrong stamp. And, as no letters can pass through a Spanish post-office which are not paid in full, you are obliged to go back again. At last you get your letter off. And, if you be wise, you make a vow that you will write no more letters as long as you remain in Spain.

The process of receiving letters is nearly as complicated as that of despatching them, for the Spaniards have devised a pleasant little plan, by means of which you may get your neighbour's letters quite as easily as your own. You call at the Poste Restante, and are referred to a long row of frames hanging round the outside of the building. These turn out, on inspection, to be lists of letters lying inside for identification. The name alone is given, and as it is nearly always wrongly spelt, and as the traveller has several dozens of names from which to make his selection, the process affords scope for wiling away a little time, and exercising ingenuity in deciphering hieroglyphics. Each name has a number prefixed, so the traveller presents himself at the inquiry window with a demand for number so and so. If his Spanish numerals be shady, he gets somebody else's property; but if he make an intelligible demand, he will get his own letter; always supposing that it has been correctly numbered, and that no one has been to fetch it before him.

Having gone through a course of post-office discipline, the sojourner in Seville will have qualified himself for the still more arduous and exciting task of money-changing. Having been duly informed by his London bankers that they have advised a certain sum of money to his credit at the house of their correspondent at Cadiz, he writes to have it sent on to their agents at Seville. He hears that this has been done, and then, if he have been brought up in Lombard-street notions of punctuality and despatch, he fondly imagines he has nothing to do but call and get it. He does call, and, if his patience hold out, he does get it—at last; but the process is something like the following:

The agent is a merchant, who cannot, or will not, speak any language but his own, and, as his mouth is temporarily engaged with a monster Havannah, he is not inclined to speak more than he can help, even of that. A quarter of an hour or so is occupied in catching a polyglot clerk, who expounds the business to his principal. It does not appear to be to his taste, for he draws a cheque in a very sulky way, and, without bestowing a look on the traveller, betakes himself to his newspaper. The next thing is to find the particular bank indicated on the cheque. The aid of a cabman is invoked, who naturally enough drives his unfortunate fare to every bank except the right one. When he does discover it, he discovers also that it is the festival of St. Isidore, or St. Somebody else of local celebrity, and that no business is transacted on that day. He notes the name of the street, and resolves to put in an appearance in the morning.

Spaniards, as a rule, are averse to cash payments, when paper will answer as well: so the production of the cheque is followed by a tender of a bundle of notes. It is by no means unlikely that some of these may belong to banks which have stopped payment for six months; and as the traveller has his own misgivings concerning the soundness of Spanish credit, he begs to be accommodated with gold. This proposal appears to operate prejudicially on the clerk's nervous system, for he puts his shoulders and arms through a series of complicated movements, emblematical of wonder and dismay,

and clenches the matter by a solemn declaration that there is no gold in the bank, and that the traveller must take the notes or nothing. With dismal reflections on the state of Spanish finance, he wends his way back to the merchant's office. His appearance is the signal for a burst of virtuous indignation. Does he expect, that honest citizen wishes to know, that they are going to coin money for his especial benefit? Why does he not take what he can get, and be thankful, as better men have been before him? Having restored his mind to comparative tranquillity by this well-timed piece of sarcasm, it seems to occur to the merchant that his customer ought to have something for his letter of credit beyond foul words and surly looks, so he proceeds to explain in somewhat blander tones that there really is a remarkable dearth of gold in the town just now, but that he thinks he knows where gold may be bought. So the clerk of many languages is in requisition once more, and accompanies the traveller to divers dingy dens, bearing a suspicious resemblance to the abode of money lenders of the Jewish persuasion. Having now consumed the greater part of two days in the simple process of getting a cheque for fifty pounds changed, and seeing no reasonable prospect of turning it into cash, without leaving ever so much per cent. in the hands of these town-bred brigands, the traveller rushes off to the merchant's office with his blood at boiling point, and delivers himself in his native tongue of sentiments that would rather startle the man of business, if he could in the least comprehend them. The traveller winds up by tearing the cheque to pieces. The merchant begins to think that matters have gone too far, and that his London correspondents may not be altogether flattered by his reception of their letter of credit; so, almost as soon as the infuriated Briton has reached his hotel, the polyglot clerk makes his appearance with many bows and smiles, and states that, by making superhuman exertions, his master has been enabled to scrape the money together, and that if the traveller will have the kindness to draw a fresh cheque, he is ready to count out the gold on the table. Left to his own reflections once more, the traveller perceives that Andalusia is not a favourable region for the speedy conducting of banking operations.

Hotels in Seville are good and reasonable. As a rule they are kept by foreigners, Italians or French; for the Spaniard still clings fondly to his notion of what an hotel ought to be—a place where you and your horse may sleep, with the privileges of a common fire for cooking any provisions you may chance to have brought with you.

Communication with foreign nations has done much to destroy this national institution, and the result is, that in southern Spain, board and lodging may be obtained for less than would be demanded in most parts of France or Germany. In Seville, for example, first-floor apartments are to be rented in an hotel which commands a view of one of the most fashionable thoroughfares, at the rate of two dollars a day for an adult, and one dollar for children. This includes two capital meals at the table d'hôte, with a fair proportion of inferior wine. Most reasonable people would be content with this, when it is remembered that a Spanish breakfast is almost a dinner, or rather an early luncheon, and, besides meat and pastry, winds up with dessert. A repetition of this meal at five or six o'clock will be quite as much as most digestions can safely undertake. But, if the bill of fare be princely in its dimensions, there are one or two drawbacks to a public meal which render a less sumptuous repast in private more to the taste of travellers with English-bred notions of politeness. In the first place every Spaniard smokes. Meet him when and where you will, there is the inevitable cigar. So he is pretty sure to bring it in to dinner with him, and the smallest delay between the courses finds him puffing away with such vigour as to make a stranger wonder whether, for some unknown cause, the dinner is being served in the smoking-room of the establishment. In the next place, Spaniards seem to suffer from colds and bronchial affections to a most alarming extent. A priest at the altar, an actor on the stage, a man of fashion at the club, your next neighbour at the table d'hôte, perform such prodigies of expectoration as can only result from the chronic derangement of the national mucous membrane. Bating these little peculiarities, there is nothing to hinder an enjoyable meal.

The bedroom is sure to be cool, for houses and streets are so constructed as to keep out as much sunshine as possible. Some of the streets have wires drawn across from house to house, over which canvas is spread during the heat of the day; and, as many of the shopkeepers dispense with window-fronts, and allow their goods to lie exposed in tempting profusion, the sensation is like that of walking through a gigantic fancy fair. There are three things to be noted in streets devoted to private residences: First, that all the houses have projecting windows from the first floor to the top. This gives much the same sort of character to a house that a good nose does to a human face, and is a most pleasing relief after the dull monotony of an English terrace. The effect is further enhanced by the framework being painted in all kinds of bright colours, according to the taste of the owner. Secondly, in place of a solid street door there is always an iron gate, tastefully wrought in filagree work, and affording a most captivating glimpse of the marble court, or patio, with its fountain in the centre, and orange-trees and heliotropes grouped around. Thirdly, the windows on the ground and first floor are furnished with stout iron bars, raising an unpleasant suspicion that burglaries must be of very common occurrence in Seville, or that a somewhat unreasonable portion of the city is de-

voted to sponging-house accommodation. The custom, however, is not altogether due to fear of thieves, but to fear of intrigue. Spanish ladies not being allowed to see their lovers with as much freedom as among ourselves, make up for the restriction by private assignations. Two or three unpolite proverbs are in existence as to the amount of vigilance that should be exercised over women; and the iron bars in question are the proverbs put into practice.

If asked what is the most prominent feature of ordinary street life in Seville—as I saw it before the present Revolution—the unhesitating answer would be, soldiers. Supposing that other towns are as liberally supplied with defenders as the capital of Andalusia, her most Catholic majesty must needs have had a good-sized army. Anticipations of a pronunciamento on a small scale may help, on occasion, to swell the Seville garrison to a portentous size; but the every-day aspect of the city is enough to drive a stranger into a frenzy of perplexity, if he begin to think where all the swarms of soldiers come from—how they are paid and fed—and what they do for their money. The last thing at night and the first thing in the morning there they are, prowling about in pairs: lean, and gaunt, and hungry. Waspish waists and an air of faded gentility are the characteristics of the officers. If ribands and decorations be any sign of valour, most of them must be perfect lions in fight. An unprejudiced observer might be inclined to think that a little more bone and muscle would not detract from their warlike capacities; but what they want in height of body they make up in length of sword. Privates, as well as officers, wear their side arms at all hours of the day and night—an arrangement that helps to swell the list of cutting and wounding for which Seville is deservedly renowned.

A timely notice placarded in the patio of the hotel announces that on such and such an evening, Señor Somebody, with his company of ladies and gentlemen, will execute all the favourite national dances. The payment of a dollar by a stranger, and of a quarter of that sum by a more highly favoured native, introduces the visitor into a long and dreary room, along the sides of which are seated rows of gloomy-looking individuals, who appear to be awaiting the commencement of business, with the amount of cheerfulness usually manifested by patients in a dentist's ante-room. The entrance of four women in short petticoats, and the same number of men in preternaturally tight small-clothes—each of them a dancer of renown—fails to arouse the company from its abject despondency. But as the mysteries of the dance begin to unfold themselves with a grace and dignity that leave all conceivable ballets at a hopeless distance, it turns out that most of the grim spectators have castanets concealed beneath their cloaks. As the pulse begins to quicken, the castanets begin to play; first feebly, then loudly, then madly. Some banjo-like guitars catch the enthusiasm and set up a twanging that speaks well for the strength of cat-gut. The whole is crowned by a general stamping of feet, in the midst of which half a dozen or so of the spectators fling off their cloaks, rush into the midst of the dance and display an activity and vigour which are only to be surpassed by their professional brethren. Is it pretty? somebody may ask. That depends upon taste. The figures of the dancers are graceful beyond all words; but the din of the castanets, and the general uproar are calculated to interfere with enjoyment. In the open air, and with plenty of space at command, the performance would be charming enough, but none save the strongest nerves ought to try the experiment under a roof.

It is difficult to decide whether Spanish Theatres are to be classed as places of entertainment, or whether they should not be regarded as partaking of the nature of a severe penitential discipline. The air of depression that pervades the audience, and the absence of anything which could be interpreted as a symptom of enjoyment, would favour the last supposition. The men shroud themselves in their cloaks, and lapse into a state of coma. The women telegraph with their fans to favoured acquaintances, and pay as much attention to the play as they do to the admonitions of their duennas. Tragedy, in an unlimited number of acts, seems most in vogue, and best harmonises with the woebegone aspect of the audience. A prompter is ensconced in a little box in the middle of the foot-lights, as in France and Italy, and as he not only reads every word of the play in a key that is audible half over the house, but tells the actors where to stand, and what to do, the interest of the drama does not flag from the audience not knowing what is to come next. The one advantage of theatre-going (next to a pretty and well ventilated house) is that, judging by time, full equivalent is given for your money. An uniform charge is made for admission, but this must be supplemented by a further sum, varying according to the part of the house that is chosen. The entire outlay need not exceed two shillings.

There is one impression that a stranger can hardly fail to bring away from the theatre, which is, that Spanish ladies are the best gloved women in the world. And so they ought to be, when, besides the natural advantage of well shaped hands, they make glove buying part of the serious business of life. A Seville glove shop is a curiosity. The counter is adorned with a row of small cushions, the probable use of which gives rise to a variety of wild conjectures on the part of a stranger. These are intended for ladies' elbows to rest upon, while the shop assistants (always men) pull the gloves on for them. No lady would dream of fitting herself with gloves, any more than with shoes. As señoras rather pique themselves upon not wearing the same gloves more than once, the glove-fitting operation has to be often repeated. Whenever a row of women

are seen undergoing the operation, the picture is sure to be garnished with a fringe of admiring cavaliers.

THE PURCHASE SYSTEM.

A TALE.

"There Milly! Never say I was not born under a lucky star," cried Frank Chester, bursting into his young wife's room, and triumphantly putting a paper into her hand.

The paper contained the official intimation to Lieutenant Chester, that on the sum of eleven hundred pounds being lodged in the agent's hands, he would be gazetted to a captain's commission in his regiment.

"Why, Frank," said Milly, after reading it, "you'll be a captain after all, then? Oh, you dear old boy!" The little woman laid her hands upon his shoulders and gazed into his face with such a proud and happy look in her great blue eyes, that Frank could do nothing less than be suddenly very spooney and sentimental indeed—because she was.

A tall broad-shouldered young fellow of six-and-twenty, was this same Frank Chester, with a mass of crisp light curls climbing over his broad forehead, in utter ignorance of a parting, and bursting out everywhere into mutiny against being trimmed short after military fashion.

Some two years before, while these curls were on a visit at a country parson's, they had won the heart of Milly, youngest daughter of the house. After a short and happy engagement, the pair had been married: Frank bearing his little wife away to his regiment in India, much to the sorrow of the parsonage, where it was said that the sun never went down as long as Milly was in the house. After a couple of years spent in India, the young couple had returned to England with the regiment, and were, at the time now in question, quartered in a garrison town not far from London.

Owing to several men above him having left or exchanged on the return of the regiment, Frank Chester had found himself "first for purchase for his company" some time before he had expected it.

"And now, Milly," said Frank, "the next thing is to arrange about the money. I've been adding up, and we've just got the regulation price—that's eleven hundred pounds, you know; but I've promised Esdale, whose step I get, to give six hundred more, and that's what troubles me, you see. I don't like running into debt, and yet we can't afford not to purchase."

"But, Frank," urged Milly, "why do you give the six hundred pounds then? If you haven't got it, why can't you tell Captain Esdale so, and pay the regulation price only?"

"Because if I did, Milly, Esdale would exchange at once, and the step would be lost. Besides, it's the custom of the Service. And I can always get the money back."

"Yes, dearest; but it seems such a dreadful thing to be in debt, and for such a large sum. Why, it's nearly as much as the price of the company!"

"Oh, as to *that*, it's thought rather cheap by our fellows. There's Shilson the other day gave nine hundred, and Ramsay, of the Hundred and Tenth is offering a thousand, and can't get any one to take it; so there's nothing against my getting as much when I sell out. After all, it's as broad as it's long, Milly."

"But still, Frank, it does seem so horrid to be in debt and not able to pay it. Why can't we wait, and not purchase? We are very comfortable as we are; and though I'd rather see you a captain than anything, still, don't you think, Frank, we can't afford it?"

"My dear little woman, you don't understand these things, and you never will. I might be ten or twelve years before I got my company, without purchase, and all the while every youngster in the regiment would be going over my head, one after another. I couldn't stand it, Milly; besides, I can exchange out again, and get three or four hundred for that."

"And have to go out to India again? Oh, Frank, we couldn't do it, and the baby only a year old, and it never was well out there. Don't do that, there's a darling."

The blue eyes filled up again, and would not be comforted until Frank promised that he would not exchange, and that the baby should not go out to India again.

He lighted a cigar, and turning out of his pretty little garden, strolled across to the mess.

"Well, captain, how are you?" said a youngster, as he came in. "You are a lucky fellow. I only wish I had your chance. Why, you're under seven years' service, and Travers has thirteen, and not an idea of his company."

Travers was the senior lieutenant, and had been half way up the list when Chester joined as a boy; but not being for purchase, Frank was now going to pass over his head, as several had done before him.

Frank turned away to a side table strewn with letters, and, picking out three or four directed to himself, began to open them.

The first enclosed a card:

Mr. T. Robinson,

8, Wessex-street, Strand, W.C.

On the other side, neatly printed in running-hand, was the following:

"If you are in want of money, I will give you ninety pounds for your bill for one hundred pounds at six months, or I will lend you money at five per cent on security."

The second, ornamented with a staring red monogram, was a lithographed letter as follows:

"Sir. Hearing confidentially from a third party that you are trying to raise money on your own security, I write to inform you that I am prepared to supply you with the needful, to any amount, on your own note of hand, at a low rate of interest, and at any time you may require it. No fees. Bills not renegotiated. The strictest confidence observed. No con-

nexion with any of the advertising fraternity.—Yours obediently,

"NATHANIEL LEVI, &c. &c."

The third enclosed a neatly-printed pamphlet, emanating from the "Military, Naval, Civil, and Volunteer Loan and Discount Agency Company, Limited," and was entitled, "Hints to Borrowers." It contained some twenty pages of advice to these unfortunates as to the various kinds of securities available, together with the best way of negotiating them, and wound up with a strong recommendation of the "Military, Naval, &c., &c., Company, Limited," as a means for forwarding such transactions.

These letters being a fair sample of what Chester and every officer in his regiment had been receiving daily since their return to England, it is not surprising that our intending borrower did not jump at the very promising offers they contained.

A step sounded on the staircase, and Esdale, the officer whose company Frank was about to purchase, strolled in.

"How d'you do, Esdale?"

"How are you, Chester? More accommodating friends, I see; what is it this time?"

"The old story," replied Frank. "But seriously, Esdale, I want to go to one of these fellows for your six hundred, till I can raise the money elsewhere, and I don't know how to set about it."

"The easiest thing in the world, my dear boy; go up to old Leverson, Cavendish-court; I'll give you my card, and he'll let you have it without any fuss, and you may be sure he won't send your paper flying all over town for want of an owner. I've had hundreds from him, and never found him wanting yet."

"How about interest?" asked Frank, cautiously.

"Oh, anything from five to fifty per cent, I fancy; but that won't be much, for I suppose you'll exchange, and get the money that way."

"Well, yes. I—I suppose I shall," said Frank, put ill at ease with himself by the recollection of Milly at home, and his promise touching the baby.

It was not until night that Frank told his wife what had passed between him and Esdale, and announced his intention to go up to town by the morning train, and see Mr. Leverson personally.

Cavendish-court was not easily found next day, when he went up to London by early train. It was a dingy smoke-dyed lane lying somewhere near Charing-cross, between the railway terminus and Whitehall; Mr. Leverson's abode was the dingiest and most smoke-dyed house in the court; and, as Frank knocked, he could not help wondering how a capitalist of such means as Mr. Leverson could condescend to inhabit such a place. However, the door opening, cut his wonder short, and finding from the sallow undersized boy who answered his knock, that the capitalist was within, he entered a dingy office containing a high desk, ink-stained, and strewn with papers, an old almanac, a print of Martin's Last Day, and as dirty a window as Frank had ever seen.

Leaving him in this unpromising room, the boy disappeared through a second door; then reappeared with the request that Frank would walk in, as Mr. Leverson was quite at leisure.

Frank had pictured to himself a thin, pinched, querulous old man, with one hand on a cheque book and one leg in the grave, who would screw him down to the lowest point, or pay one-half his advance in bad pictures or worse wines. Mr. Leverson was a stout hearty man of some forty years of age, with a rosy face dimpled into a continual smile; slightly bald, but with what hair he had, carefully made the most of; he was dressed in plain grey, and wore no rings, chains, or any of the jewellery conventionally associated with the persons of money-lenders.

He was seated in a comfortable arm chair by the side of a handsome secretaire. A bird was hanging in the window; several cheap engravings, prettily framed, ornamented the walls, which were covered with a paper all rose buds and trellis work.

On Frank's entrance he rose, and cordially held out his hand, pushing a chair forward opposite his own, and smiling as if he had known, and had been expecting, Chester all his life.

"From Captain Esdale—one of my oldest and best friends," he began, reading the card which Frank handed to him. "And how, may I ask, did you leave Captain Esdale, sir? In good health, I trust, as usual?"

"Yes, I believe, much as usual," answered Frank; "he recommended me to you as——"

"Ah! exactly so," interrupted the capitalist, smiling in the greatest good humour, "the captain always remembers his friends. What deliciously warm weather! Quite summery for April, and prospects of a magnificent harvest, sir!"

Frank assented: not that he knew much, or cared much, about the harvest just then.

"Are you making a long stay in London, Mr. Chester? Good name; very good name. Any connexion of General Chester?"

"Only distantly—a connexion, nothing more. We have but few relatives living, and they are abroad."

"I see, sir. In India I presume? Charming country! And the pay so good too there. Quite an elysium for young officers, I am told."

Frank hadn't found it exactly an elysium, but he said nothing to the contrary. "Everything depends on this fellow's being in a good humour," he thought. So he merely assented with a laugh, and tried to bring the conversation round to the matter nearest his heart.

"I called to see you, Mr. Leverson——" he began, blushing.

"What ever you want, you know. No questions. A small temporary accommodation. I hear the winner of the Derby stands at sixty to one; capital chance to make a good thing. What shall I say, twenty, fifty, a hundred? Say the

word, Mr. Chester; as a friend of Captain Esdale's, three or six months, and renew as often as you please; that's my way of doing business—money down, and no questions. Allow me to offer you a glass of sherry." He pushed the decanter across.

Frank helped himself, and stammered out that he wanted six hundred pounds for the purchase of his company; as to repayment, he hoped to repay within the year, either by exchange or through his friends.

"Six hundred!" said the capitalist, his smile growing a shade colder; "certainly, and for so laudable an object! It's a certainty, my dear Mr. Chester; companies are rising every day. You'll make money by it, mark my words; you'll make money, sir." He touched a hand-bell on the table.

"Bring the cheque-book, Henry," to the boy, who answered the summons, "and fill in a blank cheque for six hundred. Mr. Chester, I'm sure your security is undeniable; excuse my mentioning it; merely a matter of form."

"Security!' stammered Frank. "Why, I thought—at least Captain Esdale told me that you——"

"My dear sir," said Mr. Leverson, leaning forward and speaking earnestly, "don't say another word. I quite understand, perfectly so; a little matter of expectancy—of waiting—precisely so. May I ask Mr. Chester's age?"

"Mr. Chester?"

"The gentleman who has the honour to be your father."

"My father died when I was a child. I have neither father nor mother."

"Dear me, very sad. Then you have really no expectations?"

"None."

"And no security at all to offer?"

"None, except my commission."

"Perhaps you have some friends who would lend their names, just for form's sake; Captain Esdale for instance; makes it come so much lighter, you see."

Frank shook his head. "No, Mr. Leverson, I can't ask it. I want the money, and will pay for it. I can give you a hold on my commission as captain, which is surely enough. More than that, I cannot give!"

"The terms will be a little high, Mr. Chester, but I can let you have the money."

The boy entered with the cheque-book. The capitalist signed the filled-up cheque, tore it out of the book, gave the book to the boy again, and the boy disappeared.

"If I understand you, Mr. Chester, you want the sum of six hundred pounds on the security of your commission—a security, I may at once tell you, that is worth but little, as such."

"How do you make that out? It's worth one thousand eight hundred pounds, without what I can get over regulation."

"Exactly so; but in the event of your death or, pardon me, your dismissal from the service?"

"My friends would pay you!" said Chester, indignantly.

"Will they put that on stamped paper?"

"I haven't asked them."

"You may have previous liens on your commission."

"None, on my honour!"

"Pardon me; I only said, might. We are talking business, now. I merely wished to show you the weakness of your security, as such; nothing more. Here is a cheque for six hundred pounds; here is a promissory note at twelve months, to repay me the sum of eight hundred pounds, value received; and here is a paper authorising me to deduct that amount, with interest, from your commission money, should you sell out."

"Why, it's over thirty per cent!" gasped Frank.

"Thirty-three pounds six shillings and eight pence per cent per annum, exactly. Levi opposite would charge you fifty. If you can't pay the money at the twelve months' end, you can renew at ten per cent—a mere bagatelle. Exchanges are going at six hundred now. There's no fear of your not being able to pay it, long before it falls due."

Frank considered for a moment. If he failed to obtain the money, his character in the regiment would be affected, as a man who had put down for purchase, without the means to do so. On the other hand, the fact of becoming a captain was a great fact; an exchange would make it all right; and regiments now remained so short a time abroad, that it would be easy to leave Milly and the baby at home while he went out.

"Well, Mr. Chester, shall I give you the cheque?"

Frank held out his hand, and the treacherous slip of paper was his own. He hurriedly signed what was laid before him for his signature, and, wishing the capitalist "good morning," clapped his hat on, and burst out of the room into the open air.

When he opened his garden gate in the evening, Milly ran out to meet him, all blue ribbons and muslin.

"Well, dearest? Have you got it?"

"Yes, Milly, it's all right," he replied, kissing her. But he did not tell her what he was to pay for it.

"Oh, I'm so glad, you dear old captain!" And Milly clapped her hands and ran in to order dinner, while Frank went up to dress.

In the next Friday's Gazette appeared the following: "111th Regiment, Lieutenant Francis Chester to be captain, by purchase, vice Esdale, who retires."

After this, all went on again in the usual routine. Frank found his duties much lighter than before, and more pleasant; he was able to devote more time to Milly; he had not to go on those dreadful "guards," which used to keep him all night and part of two days. In short, there could be no possible doubt about it; he had done a very wise and sensible thing.

At all events, so he thought, and so, as in duty bound, thought Milly.

He had written to an uncle in India who he thought would be likely to help him in repaying Leverson; and he had gone down once or twice to an old gentleman who had stood godfather to him in years gone by; but the old man had grown crusty and suspicious since those days, and Frank soon found out that there was a vast difference between a half sovereign "tip" to a school-boy, and a tip required by a captain in Her Majesty's Service.

Still, there were only two months gone yet, out of the year of grace, and in ten months something was sure to turn up. "Besides, after all, if the worst comes to the worst, I can always exchange." He said this to himself though, and not to Milly.

But somehow or other ten months more did slip by, in a most unaccountable way, and still he had made no provision towards meeting the eight hundred pounds owing to Mr. Leverson.

"I shall have to renew; that's all," he thought. "Leverson said he would renew, and only charge ten per cent." So the easy-going fellow went on with his work, as though the whole thing were settled comfortably.

On the day previous to that on which the "bill" would fall due, came this letter from Leverson.

"Dear Sir. As your promissory note which I hold for eight hundred pounds falls due the day after you receive this, I shall be glad of a communication from you as to your wishes with regard to meeting it.—I am, your obedient servant,

"J. Leverson.

"To Captain Chester, &c., &c."

He answered thus:

"Dear Sir. I find it is not quite convenient to pay off the eight hundred pounds I owe you just at present. I shall, therefore, be obliged if you will renew, as you said, at ten per cent for another year.—Yours, &c.,

"Frank Chester."

By return came the reply:

"Dear Sir. In answer to your favour of yesterday, I enclose promissory note for eight hundred and forty-five pounds at six months, being amount of principal and interest, with expenses for that time. This you will please sign and return, and I will remit your original note cancelled.—Yours, &c.,

"J. Leverson."

To this Frank wrote:

"Sir. I asked you to renew for twelve months, and should wish that arrangement carried out. Meanwhile, I enclose the note for six months, signed as you desired.—Yours, &c.,

"Frank Chester."

The capitalist answered:

"Dear Sir. I am sorry I cannot comply with your wishes. My rule is to renew for six months certain at ten per cent—a mode of business practised by no other office in London. At the expiration of that time I shall be glad to meet you, should you still require accommodation, with a view to fresh arrangements.—Yours, &c.,

"J. Leverson."

Enclosed was the first note, and this Frank locked up in his desk, among other less costly curiosities already there. Then he sat down and wrote another letter to his uncle in India, setting forth his difficulties, and how they had unavoidably arisen, and entreating him for the loan of six hundred pounds, to stand at interest till he should be able to pay it off.

When Milly came in from a walk, and saw the writing desk in front of her husband, she knew that he had been writing about the money; and although she did not ask the question, Frank understood well enough why the scarlet feather came brushing against his face, and why the warm cheek nestled against his own; but he pretended not to know, and went on scribbling absurd faces and comical little figures on the blotting paper, as if his only thought were to cover it as quickly as possible.

The summer was come again. Strawberries and cream had given in to cherries, and cherries were beginning to look foolish beside the rosy-cheeked apples, when the long-expected letter from Uncle John arrived.

Milly and her husband were sitting in the little arbour at the end of their garden, watching the efforts of the baby to make a clean frock dirty: in which it succeeded admirably, considering its limited understanding and the general lack of available dirt.

For a few minutes the letter lay on the table unopened, both fearing to know its fate; then Milly, as the bolder of the two, snatched it up, and breaking it open, read as follows:

"Dear Nephew. I am sorry to find you have commenced so early in life to run into debt. When at your age, I did the same, and have not paid all off yet. However, as my sister Mary's only child, I cannot leave you altogether in the lurch. I, therefore, enclose a bill for a portion of the sum you mention, to be applied to the reduction of your debt. I am writing this in my 'kutcherry,' where the thermometer stands at ninety-six, so you must excuse brevity.—Your affectionate uncle,

"John Parnell."

Enclosed was a bill on the Oriental Bank for four hundred pounds. A bright pink slip of paper, all flourishes and watermarks, which Milly thought the prettiest thing she had ever seen.

"Oh, Frank, dear, I'm so glad! How kind of Uncle John, is it not? And now there is only two hundred pounds left to pay off,

and we shall soon save that out of your pay. I was adding up to-day, and I find I can save fifteen shillings a week out of the house-keeping money, and that's thirty-nine pounds a year. And if we wash at home that's another ten pounds, and baby won't want anything for ever so long, and I don't intend going to any more balls or parties. Oh, it'll be such fun, Frank dear, won't it?"

But Frank looked rather glum, as if he did not see much fun in it. Truth to say, he felt remorseful for having deceived Milly.

"Why, Frank dear, you don't look a bit happy. What's the matter? Don't you think it's a good one?" The little woman took up the bill, and began reading it over, as if fearful it was a sham.

"Oh, it's right enough," said Frank, rather sulkily; "give it to me, and I'll go and pay it into the bank before it gets lost." He stretched out his hand and took it away from her.

"Frank! Frank! what is the matter? You never spoke like that before; I'm sure it is quite safe with me, I wouldn't lose it for the world. What is the matter, Frank? You are not angry with me?" She burst into tears, and buried her poor little face on his shoulder.

"My own darling, of course I am not; I didn't mean to be so cross, only it *is* a nuisance to have to pay away all this money to Leverson, and get nothing for it."

"But, Frank, you did get something for it? You got your company, and that's a great thing to get."

"So it is, but still it does seem like throwing money away. Only think what we might have bought with it; why we could have set up a little carriage! And you know how much you have wished for one."

"But I don't now, Frank, really. I'd much rather walk, indeed I would; and the pony would always be getting ill, and the man would eat ever so much, and you'd get thrown out and have your legs broken, and then you'd be obliged to sell out, and what would become of us then? My dear Frank, I don't want the carriage, indeed I don't."

Next week, carrying with him the bill for four hundred pounds, he started for London, on a visit to Cavendish-court.

The court was as smoke-dyed and dingy as ever—perhaps a trifle more so, than when he saw it in the spring; but Mr. Leverson still looked as cool and as smiling as ever, and was charmed to see him.

After mutual greetings, he produced his bill, handing it over to the money-lender with an intimation that it was to form part payment of the loan.

"Much obliged, Mr. Chester," said Leverson, glancing at it, and throwing it carelessly on the table, "four hundred pounds, yes, exactly, leaving a balance of—of—" he rapidly turned over the leaves of a ledger—"of four hundred and forty-five pounds due September 21st. Twenty-six days yet to run."

"Yes, that's it," said Frank. "Now, what arrangement can you make to let the balance run on for another year?"

"Another year. Twelve months. It's a long time, and money rising every day. Can't we say six months?"

"I want it for a twelvemonth," cried Frank. "I'll pay you fair interest for it. You ought to trust me now, after paying off half."

"So I do, my dear sir, so I do. As you say, half paid off. Still, you see, the four hundred pounds only covers the interest of the loan—little more. The principal still remains."

"And pretty good interest too," broke out Frank. "Thirty-three per cent!"

"Excuse me, Mr. Chester, you came to me, not I to you. You wanted the money, and I gave it, on my own terms, and I will do so again on my own terms."

"How much, in Heaven's name?" cried Frank, frightened at the change in the Leversonian manner.

The capitalist pencilled some figures on a slip of paper, and handed the slip to Frank.

	£	s.	d.
To original debt . . .	445	0	0
To interest to Sept. 21, 18—	178	0	0
To stamps, &c. . . .	1	10	0
Total . .	624	10	0

"Why, that's more than before!" said Frank, turning pale.

"It is."

"The interest is higher, too."

"Forty per cent. Money is dearer than it was; the security also is less."

"How do you make that out?"

"They are going to reduce the army by two companies per regiment, in which case you will be a supernumerary, and will be liable to be placed on half-pay."

"I shan't pay it!" cried Frank, losing his temper.

"Very good, Mr. Chester; but I still hold your promise to that effect, and a gentleman's word is usually something."

"You must excuse me, Mr. Leverson. I beg your pardon. I'm an excitable sort of fellow, and you know I'm not used to this sort of thing. I'll pay you the money. No, not that, thank you!" as Leverson pushed the new bill towards him. "Not that. I'll pay you the money on the 21st, I think it is. Good morning, sir; sorry I lost my temper. Good day!"

It was in no enviable frame of mind that he hurried along the streets. He felt angry with himself for having broken with Leverson; felt angry with the shops for displaying such stores of wealth, a very little of which was wanting to make his worldly affairs comfortable; felt angry even with poor unoffending Milly.

"If it hadn't been for her and the confounded baby, I could have exchanged at once, and made it all square," he muttered. Which showed him to be in a bitter bad temper indeed.

He had walked along Pall Mall, and turned up St. James's-street, when it struck him he would

look in at Bull's, the exchange agency. "He may have something that will do for me without my going abroad. At all events there is no harm in asking." And so in he walked.

Mr. Bull was a pleasant spoken man, with an official tone in his conversation that gave to his somewhat illegal business quite a Horse Guards' flavour.

He was surrounded by huge sets of bound ledgers and gazettes, and looked altogether like a military secretary in very flourishing circumstances.

On Frank mentioning his business, Mr. Bull pulled down one of the ledgers, and ran his finger down the page.

"Something at home, quiet and comfortable, eh? Let me see. Military train wants eight hundred; adjutancy of militia, one thousand five hundred; ditto volunteers, eight hundred; paymaster in regiment at home would exchange even; cavalry at home, regiment never leaves England, three thousand pounds, and cheap, Captain Chester, cheap, I assure you. A troop frequently goes for more."

Frank explained his object was to get money, not to pay it, and that he was in somewhat urgent need of four hundred pounds.

"Then I've got the very thing for you, Captain Chester! Only came in this morning! Regiment in India, good colonel, prospect of a run among the seniors shortly; first-rate station; only four years more to serve; and my client offers four hundred pounds—just what you want—and passage. It's the best we have had on our books for months, sir, and really worth your serious consideration."

"Thank you," said Frank, "it does seem very fair. I'll think it over. Good morning."

"Perhaps you will favour me with your address, in case I should hear of anything else likely to suit you."

Frank gave his regiment and address, and went out.

"It's an uncommonly good offer," he thought for the fiftieth time as he was whirling along in the train towards home; "just the money I want. And after all, India's not a bad place; Milly will have her carriage, and all that sort of thing; I don't see why she shouldn't like it. Besides, if a girl marries a soldier, she must expect a little knocking about."

Milly ran out and kissed her husband as was her wont, but Frank's kiss was a trifle colder than usual, and he muttered something about being tired and hot, and stumped past her, and went up to his dressing-room, as if he wanted to get away from her. At dinner, too, he answered her questions very sharply, and went on eating very grimly.

"Frank, dear, what is the matter?" asked Milly at night when they went up-stairs.

"Oh, nothing," growled Frank; "I'm bothered."

"Is it about that horrid money, dear?"

"Yes, of course."

"Frank, mayn't I know what it is? Perhaps I could help you."

It was impossible to resist the pretty, patient, winning little creature; so Frank, denouncing himself for a Monster, told her all about the exchange for four hundred pounds; and she, like a brave little woman, as she was, did not oppose it; a fact which made Frank all the more eager to give it up.

About a week before the "bill" would be due Frank received a letter from Leverson, which startled him not a little. It was as follows:

"Dear Sir. I beg to remind you that your promissory note for eight hundred and forty-five pounds, of which a balance of four hundred and forty-five pounds remains against you, will be due on the 21st instant.

"As you have declined to make any arrangement towards meeting it, I suppose you intend to pay it off in full. Should you not do so, and in the event of my not hearing from you in the meantime, I shall have to place the note in my solicitor's hands.

"Your obedient Servant,

"J. Leverson."

He took his hat, and went out to try and walk off his anxiety; but the faster he went, the more did it seem to cleave to him; the bright fields lost their beauty; the hedgerows, reddening in their autumn coats, seemed like so many straight lines leading on to the one inevitable goal awaiting him. So he turned back, and entering the town by another road, went into the club for a game of billiards; but the balls ran so contrary, and he missed so many strokes which were usually a certainty to him, that he threw down his cue in a pet, and went out into the streets again.

As he was passing the "Blue Stag," he saw a knot of men standing inside round the bar.

"Holloa! Chester," cried one of them, "have you heard about poor Travers?"

"No! What about him?" cried Frank, stopping.

"Shot himself, last night! Stockton has just had a letter from the adjutant."

"Poor dear Travers!" said Frank. "What on earth made him do it?"

"Some row about money, I believe; they say he has let in the Jews pretty considerably."

"Well, that's a comfort, at any rate," growled Frank, and strolled on towards home.

Travers had been senior lieutenant in the regiment when Chester purchased his company over him, and since then, not being able to keep pace with his brother officers, had been compelled to exchange to a West Indian regiment: going to the bottom of a list of twenty men long junior to himself in the service.

"Poor fellow," thought Frank, "he is not so far wrong, after all. No more duns where he's gone! It's of no use. I must write to Bull, and take the four hundred pounds. There's only a week more, and then I suppose I shall be clapped in jail, or placed in some equally

pleasant position; not to speak of interest at one hundred per cent. I'll write to Bull to-night. I won't tell Milly till all is settled, and Leverson is paid; I shall have better heart to do so then."

He wrote accordingly. By return of post came Mr. Bull's answer, saying that the exchange was in course of being arranged, and that the money would be paid, minus his commission of twenty pounds, as soon as it appeared in the Gazette. In a postscript he added that should Captain Chester be in immediate want of the money he would advance it at once.

This offer Frank willingly accepted, and, before the week was out, had the pleasure of sending Mr. Leverson a cheque for the four hundred and forty-five pounds, and of receiving a polite note, and his bill cancelled, by return.

A few days afterwards, the Gazette announced the exchange, and nothing was left for Frank but to settle his affairs, and join his new regiment in India.

Yes, there was one other thing. I had nearly forgotten that, though Frank had not forgotten it:

He had to tell Milly.

But he was saved that hard task after all, by Milly herself.

"I am glad you have done it, Frank dear," she whispered, taking his hand in both of hers, and looking up, lovingly, in his face. "I saw the letter lying on the table, and knew at once it was about that."

"But, Milly, do you think you can stand it? I'll leave you at home, if you like."

"Oh, Frank, don't talk so; anything but that! I don't a bit mind going; and it will be so different, now that you are a captain. When shall we start, do you think?"

"Perhaps in a month, perhaps less; I can't tell yet."

"And we shall get out just for the cold weather—how nice it will be!—and we shall see all our old friends again, and I shall have such lots of work to do in getting baby's things ready. We will take out everything this time with us, won't we, Frank?" And then she ran off to tell baby all about it; how she was going back to India, and to the beautiful hills, and to see the monkeys, and the great elephants, and to have the old "bearer" again, and she clapped her hands, and tossed the baby up, and the baby crowed, and screamed, and jumped, and fell fast asleep in her arms; and then Milly drew down the blinds, and laid her in her cot, and kneeling down beside it prayed that it might be always so, and that God would bring no harm to her darlings in the far-off land they were going to. And this was the way in which Frank's little wife bore the news that Frank was so afraid to tell.

Then there came a season of letter-writing, and visiting, and packing, and general confusion, for Frank had got a passage in one of the new troop ships, and was to sail within the month. He had settled his account with Mr. Bull, and paid off several of his most pressing bills, and found but a small balance in his agent's hands when it was finished.

However, he was clear of Leverson, and what little he still owed his fine Indian pay would soon provide; all which gave him courage for his work, and he went about cheerfully with Milly, falling in with all her plans, and cordially approving of all her purchases. And so all the purchases got to be completed, and all the farewells said, and Frank stood on the great ship's deck watching the blue land of his home grow fainter and dimmer over the wave tops, and pointed out to Milly the bluff headlands and snug harbours they might never see again. And so they watched till evening faded into night, and the great sea lights glimmered out along the coast, and the heavy south-west wind came soughing along from the wide ocean whither they were bound, whistling through the cordage, and making the vast ship quiver and plunge, and send the black water from her bows in great angry waves. And so at last Milly, shivering, drew her husband away, and they went down to the brightly-lighted saloon below, and lost themselves in the crowd of strange faces there.

Six months roll away, and husband and wife are settled in Frank's new regiment.

The ills that Milly dreaded have passed lightly over their heads; the baby has increased in stature and in power of lungs, under the old "bearer;" and Frank is well and strong, and save for a short grumble now and then at the heat, or at the monotony of the station, appears contented.

They have been living very quietly. There are still debts at home to be paid, and expenses have increased in India since they were there before. Frank has been making inquiries as to insuring his life, but the premiums are high, and their income only just suffices to keep them straight, and to pay off by degrees the remaining home bills. Thus it comes to pass that the idea of the insurance is allowed to drop.

"Next year," thought Frank, "these things will be all squared, and then we shall be able to turn round. I must chance it till then. It isn't as though Milly had nothing; she has her own hundred a year, though she can't touch the principal. What with that, and what with an officer's wife's pension, she wouldn't be a beggar."

But that year the dreaded cholera came tearing through the country, and, settling upon Frank's regiment, counted its victims by tens, and soon by hundreds. At a moment's notice the men were marched into camp, and hurried up and down in the deadly jungles, now rank and steaming from the autumn rains, in a vain attempt to fly from the pestilence.

Night and day did the officers tend their men, exhorting them to bear up and fight against their fears; night and day did they see their words of hope falsified by sudden and cruel death.

Foremost among the helpers of the sick was

Chester. Milly and the child were sent off to the hills on the first outbreak. Thus freed from anxiety on their account, he was able to devote all his time and energies to his soldiers, and he did it nobly. Many were the wild words of cursing he stayed, as he bent his face over the dying, and spoke of the home the sick had quitted, and the Heaven they were nearing; spoke words such as soldiers love, of father or mother; caught from parched lips the last few sentences of love, and held many a fevered hand till the last hard struggle was over.

Then came a slackening in the disease. Strong men no longer died in a few hours, but lived for days; recoveries became more common; medicine began to assert itself; the survivors no longer sat in moody silence, awaiting who should be the next; but ate, and drank, and set about their duties like good soldiers, and good men.

At length came a day when no more cases were reported, and on the same evening an "order" was published, thanking Captain Chester for the efficient and soldierlike way in which he had discharged his duties during the trying time just past. "The colonel commanding," it concluded, "has never witnessed such entire relinquishment of self, and such a truly noble disposition to perform every duty that could possibly tend to alleviate the sufferings of his men; and he takes this opportunity of publicly thanking that officer in the name of himself and of the regiment. It is further the intention of the colonel commanding to submit Captain Chester's name to the commander-in-chief, in order that his excellency may have an opportunity of rewarding his services as they deserve."

"Too late!" sighed Frank wearily, as he read the order. "It has come too late, I fear!" And then he went on writing his daily epistle to Milly.

When he went out to post the letter, he felt hot and feverish, his bones seemed full of aches and pains, and his head was heavy and dull. "So different to what I was in the old regiment!" thought Frank.

However, he posted his letter, and then went back to the deserted bungalow and turned in.

All that night he tossed about. What little sleep he got, was broken with dreams in which his own little Milly, was ever present, and yet never near him. Then he woke up with a start, and cried out her name, and the affrighted "punkah coolie" roused up, and pulled away wildly at the rope, and the sleepy old "bearer" crept up to the door, and sat cowering when he heard the strange rambling talk of his master, and shook his head, and slunk back again to his mat, and wished his mistress were there.

Next morning Frank sent off for the doctor.

"How long have you had this on you?" asked the doctor.

"I haven't been quite the thing for a week; but last night it came on worse, and my head felt as though it would split."

"I'll send you a draught that shall set you to-rights again."

But the draught did him no good. He lay gazing at Milly's picture over the door, and never spoke all day. The servants sat outside in a group, terror-stricken at their master's silence, and whispering long stories of former "sahibs," and how they had been taken when their "mem-sahibs" were far away in the Hills, and how Fate must be accomplished, whether it were white man or black.

But in the evening, when it was near post-time, Frank called out to the "bearer" to bring him the writing-block, and, sitting up in his bed, wrote a few lines to Milly. His hand shook so, that he could hardly hold the pen; but he applied himself to the task, and, steadying himself on his elbows, covered the sheet with all the bits of chit-chat his poor aching head could remember, and, sealing it up, gave it to the bearer to post.

In the middle of the night the bearer was startled by a loud cry. Running in to his master, he found him sitting up in bed, tossing his arms, and calling out for Milly. The old man was so frightened that he bolted off for the doctor, and told him his master was gone mad, and would be dead if he did not come at once.

"I must telegraph for his wife," said the doctor, when he saw him. Sitting down, he wrote a note to the telegraph office, giving it to the bearer, and bidding him run as though his life depended on it.

Then he set to work on Frank, cutting away all the old curls, and wrapping up his poor head in towels, with a great lump of ice on the top of them.

At the sound of the noon-day gun, Chester started up and, clutching the doctor's hand, asked fiercely:

"Where is my wife? What have you done with my wife? Where is Milly? Oh, Milly, Milly, don't forget your husband!" Then he sank back again exhausted, and closing his eyes fell into a heavy slumber.

At four o'clock the doctor went out, and telegraphed to the hotel at the foot of the Hills, asking if Mrs. Chester had left. In half an hour the answer came back, that she had left, and would arrive about nine that evening.

Then he went back to Frank.

He was awake; his face was flushed, and his pulse hammered like a steam engine; but his eyes were not so wild, and his voice, though low, was calm and collected.

"Is she coming?" he whispered. "When will she be here? Don't let it be too late, doctor."

"She will be here soon; she left some hours ago."

"I couldn't die happy without her. We have been very happy together, doctor, very happy. It's hard to part like this; it's very, very hard."

The doctor tried to reassure him, but in vain.

"I'm going, doctor; it's no good saying I'm not. I knew it, a week ago. I wish Milly would come!"

Then he dozed off again, and the ticking of the clock kept time with his heavy breathing.

About seven he called out, without opening his eyes:

"Will she be long now, doctor? Is she coming? Don't let it be too late!"

"She will be here about nine," said the doctor, damping the towels; "not much longer to wait now."

Frank dozed off again. A few minutes before the hour, he cried out once more:

"Is it nine yet, doctor? Is she come?"

"It will strike nine directly," answered the other; "only a few minutes more."

"Call the bearer, will you, doctor;" he lifted himself up and looked towards the door; "and tell him to get my brushes and some water. I must dress myself for Milly; she likes to see my hair tidy. You know, doctor, it was my hair she liked so much when we were first in love, and it must not be untidy now, must it?"

They brought the brushes and the water, and the poor fellow brushed away at his bald head, and combed the imaginary curls over his hot forehead.

"She likes them best so, doctor. Lay me down easily, so as not to disarrange them; now, put away the bottles; Milly doesn't like bottles lying about. She's a tidy little wife, doctor, and I want everything to look nice." Then he started up wildly. "Don't touch me, doctor! I hear her coming. I hear her coming! Milly, Milly, your poor old Frank's here—don't mind his not getting up, it's only a little headache—he will be well soon, and we'll go away together, and be happy. Tell her to come in doctor, will you; those servants are keeping the doors locked."

The carriage drove up, and poor Milly, pale and frightened, alighted. The doctor laid his hand on her arm, and with a quiet motion of his head led her into the room.

"Oh, Frank!"

"Milly, darling!" And the living and the dying lay clasped in each other's arms.

"I thought you would come Milly. It's a long way, isn't it; but you don't mind for Frank?"

"Oh, Frank, darling, don't talk so. I never wanted to leave you. Why did you send me away? Oh, what shall I do, what shall I do!"

"We were very happy in the little cottage, Milly. It was the 'Company' did it—Leverson, I mean—but it's all for the best—you'll come to me by-and-by, Milly darling—you'll never forget your poor old Frank?"

"I don't want to stay behind, Frank. I want to die with you!"

"We'll walk through the woods home, Milly; the sun is not hot there, and the church bells sound so well under the trees; only another week, and they'll ring for our Marriage!" He was back again at the old Kent parsonage, in the days of their wooing.

Then he turned towards her, and feeling about with his hands, called out:

"Milly! Milly! Where are you, darling? Don't go that way; there's the dark deep lake there. Milly dear, give me your hand. I didn't want to leave England, but that man made me—we couldn't pay the money, you know. Milly, they say I did my duty. God knows I loved my men, and I loved my Milly. Now I see you—so near me, so bright—the church chimes are ringing—it's for us, Milly—our wedding-day—so happy—so very happy——"

The doctor drew her tenderly from that long embrace, and led her away to his own house. She never spoke or sighed, but walked beside him like one in a trance, and sat down in the chair he placed for her, like a little child. For days she sat or stood as they told her, eating and drinking what was placed before her, and never uttering one word. At length, on the third day they brought her child to her. For a moment she looked at it vacantly; then, as it stretched out its tiny arms, she started up, clasped it to her breast, and burst into a flood of tears.

"It is better so," said the doctor, as he shut the door and went out; "Time must do the rest."

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HESTER'S HISTORY.

A New Serial Tale.

CHAPTER XVI. MISS JANET'S COMMUNICATIONS, AND A STORY OF A PASTY.

"A very nice girl indeed," pronounced Lady Helen, "and does great credit to Mary's judgment. She is so well-bred she actually makes one look to one's manners. I am only afraid that her instep is too high, and her shoulders have too elegant a slope."

"I never heard that those were signs of delicacy," said Mrs. Hazeldean. "And I think she looks healthy, if not very robust."

Lady Helen opened her languid eyes. "How odd your are, Margaret," she said. "I did not speak of health. I mean that I am afraid she is too much of a lady."

"She is not above her work," put in Miss Janet, impelled by honesty to speak from her experience.

"She is not a fool, I can tell you," said Miss Madge.

And these were some of the comments that were made upon Hester. Sir Archie, who was present when they began, suddenly left the room before they were finished.

"There he goes!" cried Lady Helen, "not a bit changed since before he went away. I am sure there is something on his mind. He will read the papers; he will ponder and fret about the rebels. I have written to Mary about it. I can do no more."

The Honourable Madge began to hum. She was knotting a silk purse for her favourite Archie; and she gave herself a little rock in her chair after she had accomplished each knot. She began to hum snatches of a pet doggrel of the glens.

"Archie Munro! Archie Munro!
Blessings go with you wherever you go!"

"I do fear he is getting into trouble," mourned Lady Helen.

"Long may the blast of the war-bugle blow,
Calling to battle brave Archie Munro!"

hummed the Honourable Madge in her little cracked voice.

"Leave Archie to himself," said Mrs. Hazeldean, hastily, raising her voice to drown the words of Madge's song. "Not one of us here is fit to advise him. He will act for the best."

"I wish you would hold your tongue, Madge," whimpered Lady Helen. "I don't think you would care if he were carried off from us to-morrow. And it's very easy for you to talk, Margaret, about his acting for the best, but I tell you that I have always been subject to presentiments."

Lady Helen's nostrils and lips began to quiver, and Mrs. Hazeldean saw a rising storm of terror in her eyes. Therefore Hester was immediately sent for to take her ladyship's dimensions for a dress; which timely diversion of the nervous lady's thoughts was a godsend in its results to all the household.

"I shall ask you, Miss Cashel, to come with me and take a look over my wardrobe," said Lady Helen, rousing herself, with a sigh, to make the effort of encountering a frivolous necessity. "I am afraid you will be shocked at the state of neglect in which you will find it. Your nice ideas will be offended at seeing fashions six months old. For what with anxiety of mind, and the natural carelessness which steals upon one in a quiet place like this, I must own I have been neglectful of some of the duties of my state in life."

"They accumulate, you see," said Lady Helen, looking round her with a victimised air, while Hester stood aghast, among rows of scarce-worn dresses. "The time will go on, and one's clothing must be renewed. Dresses will multiply, although I am so moderate. Queen Elizabeth had a dress for every day in the year, Miss Cashel. And yet she lived, you know, in comparatively a barbarous age."

Lady Helen put in that "you know" with an emphasis, and a manifest satisfaction, which showed how finely she appreciated the luxury of having a lady who had probably read history, for her dressmaker.

When Hester went back to her tower room, carrying a load of finery in her arms, she found Miss Janet established at her fireside. A soft misty rain was drifting down the glen beyond the window. The world outside looked wrapped up in a rent white garment, some shaggy crowns of mountains, and some straggling arms of trees being here and there thrust through the ragged holes.

Miss Janet nodded at Hester when she entered, and went on warming her silk-shod feet at the pleasant glow in Hester's grate. She had picked out the most comfortable chair,

and lay lazily backward, looking down upon Hester's busy movements out of the dusky half-shut corners of her saucy brown eyes. Had she been a trifle less impertinent, Hester might have felt herself grow confused at such unexpected and continued observation. But the very excess of the rudeness made it seem folly to be disturbed by it. It was so plain, that the lady must be herself quite aware of it; and being thus aware, she must soon apologise and desist. Yet there was an uncomfortable feeling upon Hester that this proud Miss Janet Golden had taken an extraordinary dislike to her, was going to patronise her, and persecute her, and haunt her life, and trouble her. So thinking, but determined to be proof against little stings, she set forth her working materials, her box, and her little table, her reels of silk and her reels of thread, her scissors and her needle-case, her bodkins and her thimbles; and she picked and she snipped, and she ripped out and she puckered in, with a very cheerful face, and Miss Janet looking on.

After a good long time, Miss Janet got up (Hester never minding), and came and stood before the seamstress, and remained there gazing and chafing, and gazing still and chafing more; and Hester still taking no notice of her, she suddenly caught up the mass of work—a delicate fabric of tulle and lace—and, wisping it up in her arms, sent it flying to the other end of the room, where it sank in a soft heap, and lay ignominiously in a corner.

"Would you sit there till Doomsday, you contented thing! sewing and sewing, and smiling to yourself? Would you?"

"Lady Helen's dress!" gasped Hester.

"Dress! dress! dress!" cried Miss Janet. "Nothing but dress! Let it lie in the corner. It will do it good. I have been wanting to tell you something this hour, and you would not look up. I envy you, I admire you, I wish that we might be friends. I envy you, because you have got something to do, because you have not to go yawning about the house all the morning, falling asleep on all the couches, if lucky enough to be able to do it, and longing to pick out people's eyes, just for want of an occupation. I envy you, because you have not got everything you could wish for, because you look so pretty in that plain, plain gown, and were never in your life heaped up with gew-gaws as I am. And I would like to be friends with you, because you know how to make me ashamed of my impudence; and you cannot believe what a new sensation that is. And I would also like to be friends with you, because you are a fresh natural thing, coming into this place where we are all of us oddities. All of us oddities, I tell you. Sir Archie is an oddity of goodness; Lady Helen an oddity of silliness; Miss Madge is an oddity of oddness; and I am an oddity of discontentedness."

Hester felt a little giddy with surprise by this time; but, naturally, the sensation was a pleasant one, especially coming so close upon her former fears.

"Do stop sewing for a while, till I talk to you," said Janet, seating herself comically on a little low stool, and looking up at Hester. "I want to tell you about myself. You see I am so selfish that I can hardly take an interest in anything but myself. I have been brought up to it. I think about myself, pamper myself, pity myself, hate myself; and this takes up my time pretty much from morning until night. I never was taught anything better that I could do. But somehow I never felt inclined to talk much about myself before. Now that the impulse has come, perhaps I may talk something off, and feel the better for it. I don't know."

"I can listen and sew," said Hester.

"No, you can't. At least you ought not to be able to do it," said Janet. "One thing is tiring enough at a time, at least I find it so. Perhaps, however, nothing tires you. I should not wonder. Well, I have got everything in the world that can be thought of. I have a beautiful slice of England, all my own. They call it Amberwolds. Every mile of it is a very garden of English order and beauty. I have a house—it has not the grand, wild, tamed-savage look about it that this old place has got, neither has it that air that you feel in these old rooms, which makes you want to keep dropping on your knees every moment, as if you were in a church. But it is a lightsome, brightsome, handsome, modern hall, with every new luxury and appliance under the sun; and too large, I believe, for any number of people that could be counted to live in. Well, I have plenty of money in banks and places. And I have carriages, and horses, and servants, and jewels; and I can put my foot on anybody's neck when I like it. You needn't smile; I am not going to try yours.

"It all did very well for a time. I liked to be made a fuss about at school. I liked to be able to make rich presents to people, and see them looking astonished and overwhelmed. I liked coming home and being cheered by my tenantry, having bouquets presented to me by the village children, and being talked about as the youthful heiress. I enjoyed my two seasons in London, and then, at the end of the second, I began to get tired of being so stuffed up with pleasure. I was like Johnny or Harry when he has eaten too much plum pudding. And yet I went on eating and eating. Everything sickened me. I had done everything, seen everything, felt everything, and there was nothing more beyond, as far as I could discern, nothing for the latter half of my life, which I supposed I should have to go through like the rest of the human kind.

"The people were all the same, till I could have knocked their heads together, in hopes of making a variety. Cut two men out of pasteboard, one after one pattern, another after another, two women the same, paint them and varnish them, and look at them through a multiplying glass; and there you will have society. And neither of the patterns suited me. The men were either too silly, or too clever for me. The women were like myself, sick of every-

thing, choked up with flattery and amusement, looking desperately about to see if this were really all the world had got to offer them; or else they were worse, that is, contented at heart with the worthlessness of what they had got, yet pretending to be sick of it like the rest.

"Then I went back to my great house in the country, but I was no bigger in its vastness than a maggot in a cheese. And the place did not want me. Everything was going on too well. The people were all happy, my agent was wise and careful. I was quite a superfluous article in my own establishment. I was too small for my big possessions. They wanted somebody with a great mind and a great heart to make use of them. I had neither. I could only waste money on my own petty frivolous desires. Dresses, and jewels——"

Miss Janet paused. Hester looked down on the luxurious creature who was complaining so bitterly, and laid her hands together involuntarily as she thought with a sudden joy of the Mother Augustine.

"What are you smiling at?" Miss Janet said. "Well, there was a time came after that—I think the country after all did me good—when I got happy for a while, when I could have actually sat a whole day at a window like you, doing sewing, and smiling in a plain, plain gown. Could you believe it? But I am not going to tell you about that time. Bah! what was I talking about a moment ago? Dresses and jewels. You shall see my jewels."

And she ran away, and came back with a great brass-bound box in her arms.

"I am going to dazzle you, and make a picture of you," she said, and began loading Hester with bracelets and necklets, glittering chains, and blazing crosses, green gems, and purple gems, yellow gems, and diamonds.

Hester submitted to the operation with a smiling wonder at the novelty and absurdity of the scene.

"Now," she said, "I am like an Egyptian idol. I am a monster of magnificence."

"You are a Scheherazade—a 'beautiful Persian'— a fairy queen."

"A fairy queen would have dewdrops and bits of rainbows for her ornaments," said Hester. "She would be ashamed of your hard glaring stones and your clanking metals."

"So you despise them!" said Janet. "Well I would rather have your golden hair."

After this Miss Janet's affection for Hester seemed to grow and strengthen every day. Hester was an interest for her in this old-fashioned, dull castle, where she had only been pretending to have an interest in things before. "You shall not do any sewing for me," she said; "you will have enough on your hands between Miss Madge and Lady Helen. You shall teach me to sew, and I will sew for myself." And she actually did pick a new gown to pieces, and set to work to put it together again with a needle and thread. Whether she ever wore the said gown after this performance it is happily not necessary to recollect. But the responsibility of a great labour on her hands often brought her to take a seat at Hester's side. And she was not fond of silence, having met with a companion to her taste. Having, unasked, made a confession of her own feelings and circumstances, she claimed the right to expect that the seamstress would give her a like history of her (Hester's) experiences. But Hester was not eloquent according to her desire. Yes, she had been for some years at a good school. Yes, she had learned her art from a first-rate modiste. It would have been rude so to question her, had Janet met her in a drawing-room; but in a tower-room, with a needle in her hand, it was only sympathising and kind. But Hester was not communicative, was sometimes a little distressed. Yes, she had had a friend who had taken an interest in, and protected her. The name of that friend? Oh, there was the pink gauze floating into the fire! What a narrow escape for Miss Madge's new scarf!

Then, very often, Lady Helen came fluttering in, like an elderly butterfly, perched upon a chair for a little time, viewing with exquisite satisfaction the delicate operations which were progressing, but soon fluttered out again to her couches, her novels, and her dogs. And if any awful whispers should be going rustling about the passages, be sure the whisperers took care that Lady Helen's door was shut.

But, more often a great deal, there came Miss Madge to visit Hester. The Honourable Madge had also her rooms in the tower, just a flight of winding stairs below Hester. And the Honourable Madge held it a Christian thing to be neighbourly; and, though come of a noble lineage, as she was careful never to forget, yet the Honourable Madge was so far a model Christian as to feel warranted in being neighbourly in excess with a nice young lady seamstress, who sat stitch, stitch, stitching at Miss Madge's elegant raiment, in the chamber above her head.

She grew so very neighbourly, indeed, that of a wintry evening, when Lady Helen and Miss Janet stepped, shivering in lace and gossamer, into their coach to drive half a dozen miles in search of their dinner, she, Madge, would come tapping to Hester's door with overtures for a mutual cup of tea. It was Hester's hour of ease, the hour when she wrote her letters. Her sewing of the day was laid aside, her fire was burning brightly, her desk open on the table.

"You do look so comfortable, my dear. Ah, you sly thing, hiding away your letters! My dear, I have a soft corner for young hearts. This is a lover, I have no doubt."

"Not at all," said Hester, flushing indignantly, but keeping her hand upon the superscription of her letter.

"Well, well, child, I did not mean to offend you. But you look so very secret about it. Put it away now for the present. I have ordered up some tea."

Miss Madge had just finished her evening

excursion round the passages and byways of the castle. She had been "up-stairs, and down stairs, and into my lady's chamber." With a dark shawl covering her usually gaudy dress, with her ringlets pushed out of her eyes, with the likeness of her lover a little awry upon her forehead, and with her finger laid on her lip, Miss Madge was in the habit of going prying about the servants' quarters, listening at the doors, taking cold in her eyes with looking through the key-hole of Sir Archie's study door. But it must not be thought that Miss Madge had any sinister motive in these excursions. She did not want to know if Mike were making love to pretty Bridget, nor to be able to report that Polly was wearing her ladyship's new velvet spenser of an evening. It was only that poor Madge was possessed by the fearful uneasy spirit of the times. She went prying about in hopes of picking up the smallest scrap of news, like a famished bird seeking for crumbs. She had not always lived in a remote castle like this; she had been used to more liberty, which she liked in her wild way. The servants were not offended at her spying. They pitied her for having to live in times like these in a drawing-room, where tongues had less freedom than they allowed to themselves in the kitchen or pantry.

"I ax your pardon, ma'am, for the bluntherin' big brute that I am! But the divil a bit of informashun is to be had these couple o' days!" Pat would say, indulgently, when he met her in some shady corner, and nearly ran her down with his tray.

Perhaps it was the workings of this uneasy spirit, the desire to talk upon forbidden subjects, that drew her so near to Hester, who had evidently a kindred hunger for the secrets of the times.

"Ah, my dear," she said, parenthetically, sipping her tea, in the pauses between her stories of her political experiences, "I was not always shut up in a stifling place like this, where nothing changes from year's end to year's end but the weathercock. Not but what it is comfortable, and respectable, and—ancestral, and all that. And some people must live walled up in an old castle, or family tradition, the poetry of an ancient lineage, and that sort of thing, would be scattered over the world and quite lost. But I lived in Dublin, my dear; this time last year I was in Dublin, and I warrant you I knew then which way the wind was blowing!"

By this time the Honourable Madge had finished her tea, and possessed herself of the poker, her favourite plaything. And she fell to raking out the two lower bars of the grate, till a long red gulf was laid bare, with rough heads and promontories; or it might be a wide fiery dungeon, with jutting buttresses of walls here and there, a rugged stooping roof, blocks, benches, and chains. This last idea was the one which Miss Madge laid strong hold of.

"Christmas in the dungeon, my dear," she said, with a little wave of the poker, explaining the vision which she had unveiled behind the bars. "Scene, Kilmainham Jail; time, the blessed Christmas in the year of disaster, seventeen hundred and ninety-six. 'When the pie was opened the birds began to sing,' my dear. See how they all crowd round the table, looking into the dish!"

Miss Madge's voice was triumphant, the poker was balanced on her fingers, her eyes were riveted on the burning cinders. Hester, all excited, a little frightened, but very curious, sat gazing from Miss Madge to the fire, and from the fire to Miss Madge.

"Russell breaks the crust," Madge went on, "and sinks back in his chair. See him, the brave, gentle Russell! Nelson starts up, and dives his hand into dish. Young Teeling—poor boy!—claps his hands and shouts, Hurrah! 'Three cheers for our Christmas dish! Three cheers for the prisoners' pasty!' Ah, my dear, it was an excellent pasty, though I say it, who should not say it; for I helped at the making of it. I was staying with my friend M. I will not mention her name, my dear, for fear of accidents," said Miss Madge, looking over her shoulder. "My good friend M., as notable a housekeeper and as sound a politician as could be found in or out of the three kingdoms. She had got papers in charge—a bundle—worth a sackful of patriots' heads. She fretted about it so much that the flesh was fading off her bones. Those who entrusted the papers to her keeping said, 'We have come to so desperate a pass that only a woman's ingenuity can help us.' And she turned to me in her dismay and whispered, 'Madge, could you not manage a disguise, and offer for a situation as turnkey?' But I said, 'M. (I will not mention her name, my dear), I said, my good friend, why should I put myself so much out of my way when you are such an excellent hand at making a pasty.'

"'Making a pasty?' she said; but there never was a sharper woman at taking a hint. And we made the pasty. Such a pie crust! Blown up high like a soap bubble, rich and melting, crisp, and of a lovely light brown. And I'll warrant you there was inside meat substantial for prison digestion, and seasoning fit to tickle prison palates. Letters, my dear, and foreign newspapers, and home newspapers, with a goodly supply of writing materials to help to raise the crust. And never fear but we made our petition skilfully to the authorities, representing our womanly wish to give the captives—so sadly far from the heads of their own dinner-tables—a harmless little treat on Christmas-day. And never fear but the governor was pleased to take in the dish, accompanied as it was by one similar in size, smell, and general perfection of appearance which came craving a humble corner on his governorship's own board. My dear, a pasty of such exquisite flavour was never turned out of an oven. The governor and all the little governors tasted of it, and our captives got their pie.

"My dear, I was so uplifted about it that

my head was nearly turned, and I almost spoiled it all. I met my Lord Castlereagh that evening at a soirée, and I could not hold my tongue."

"'My lord!' I said, 'you would not guess on what a notable occupation I have been engaged this afternoon?'

"His lordship bowed.

"'I have been making a pasty,' I said.

"'A pasty?' said his lordship, quite astray.

"'A pasty,' I said. 'Would not your lordship like a slice?'

"When I looked at M., who was beside me, she had turned white, and like to faint. But his lordship only put his finger to his forehead, on the sly, as he turned away with a friend. I did not mind his thinking me mad, my dear. The far-fetched idea was a providential inspiration. Ridiculous as it may seem, it covered my indiscretion."

Many more tales like this did Miss Madge relate to Hester; but were I to follow her never so swiftly through them all, I should utterly lose the thread of this, my history. But Lady Humphrey had the pith of them all in Hester's faithful letters.

CHAPTER XVII. SIR ARCHIE TAKES A WALK DOWN THE GLEN.

It happened that on a ruddy November morning, Sir Archie met Hester coming along one of the shadowy, cloister-like upper corridors, with her arms full of white draperies—materials for finery no doubt—which fell over her shoulders, and drooped to her feet, and swathed her about like a winding-sheet. It might have been the reflection from all these white things, but her face seemed pale and her eyes had a startled look. Hester was nearly scared out of her life by the fears and wonders of the times, learned from nods, and signs, and hints of the servants, and the fantastic whispers of the Honourable Madge.

Hester curtseyed to Sir Archie; who bowed low to Hester, as low as if she had been a duchess. He stepped out of his way to open the door through which she had to pass; for which civility Hester dropped him a second curtsey; for which second curtsey Sir Archie made her another bow.

After she had vanished, Sir Archie walked down to his library with a slightly vexed look on his face. And he knew why he was vexed, which is not always the case with every one; but Sir Archie was not a man to be vexed about nothing. The trouble had passed from his face, however, by the time he took a book from the table and opened it at once at a place in which a mark had been laid. It was a volume of old-fashioned "characters," which most people know.

"She doth," said the noted page, "all things with so sweet a grace, it seems ignorance will nor suffer her to do ill, being her mind is to do well."

Sir Archie read with a peculiar smile, laid down the book, and went out. He whistled to his dogs, and set off to walk down the glen.

There was an autumn flush still lingering about the world; though the frost was in the air. Very glorious colours dyed the mountain's sides, and a lustrous haze had strayed down out of the clouds and trailed its ragged splendour through deep gloomy gorges, and over bluff rocky crowns. The sea lay in the distance, a plain of misty blue, with moving streaks of violet where the clouds were passing. The foam of the river, the ascending smoke from cottages, a white gable, a yellow thatch, all caught a glow from that crimson blush with which the sun looked on the earth. Trees on high ground were getting bare; the golden bars of cloud began to show between their trunks, behind the fretwork of their branches, almost stripped.

Sir Archie walked leisurely down the glen. He had a word to say here and there, and he turned aside into fields, and made descents into farm-yards or orchards that he might say it. He stopped at the forge at the corner of the road. The blacksmith was shoeing a farmer's horse, and Sir Archie had a chat with the blacksmith and the farmer. It was no use to think of talking of hay only; of a new roof for the forge; of the supply of turf saved for the winter among the poor; of the good harvest. The news of the day would be spoken of, and curses would come out, and fists would be clenched.

"You're a kind man, Sir Archie, an' a good lan'lord," said the blacksmith, sturdily, "an' my heart's wish and duty to you an' yours! But do you go an' talk about pace to them that hasn't got the steel between their ribs. I have a brother in the county Wicklow, an honest man, an' a good pacable man, an' that man was sent home to his wife an' childher the other day with a pitch cap on his shaved head. My sarvice to them with a willin' heart! but they've manyfactured a couple o' rebels to their hand, at wan sthroke!" And the blacksmith let fall his heavy hammer on the anvil, so that the red iron quivered, and the sparks flew up in showers all about his grim face.

The farmer was a gentle-looking old man, who had been riding a horse to that forge to be shod for over sixty years at the least.

"My son, your honour," he said, clearing a huskiness out of his throat, and beginning to speak in a quivering voice. "Your honour, my son——"

But suddenly broke down and burst into tears.

Half an hour afterwards, Sir Archie, proceeding on his way, left the two men still cursing and mourning over the anvil.

A bit further down the glen, a turning in the road brought him face to face with the happy eyes and bright cheeks of Mrs. Hazeldean.

"Who is sick or scheming now?" he said. He was much more like the brother of his handsome aunt than her nephew. Sometimes he

even assumed an elder brotherly manner; which amused Mrs. Hazeldean highly.

"We are well met," he said. "I was just going to storm you in your parlour."

"Well," said she, "you can escort me back to my parlour, if that will do for you as well. Have you anything very particular to say to me?"

"Something so particular that I cannot say it on the highway. Especially as we are coming so near the village."

"Some more evil news, I suppose," said Mrs. Hazeldean, sadly.

"No," said Sir Archie, "I think not. It is a matter purely personal, at all events.

"Purely personal," said Mrs. Hazeldean, relieved. "Is it anything about Janet?"

"A little about Janet," said Sir Archie, smiling.

Mrs. Hazeldean gave her head a little shake, and sighed, but said nothing; only quickened her steps towards her own door. Already her mind's eye beheld a wedding taking place: a wedding which she did not long to see.

She untied her bonnet-strings, and sat down upon her sofa. Sir Archie took a chair, and sat facing her and the light, resting his arms upon her dining-table.

"Now for it!" he said, and a grave change came over his manner. "Well, Aunt Margaret, I have come here all the way for the purpose of asking you to take specially under your protection that young girl whom my sister Mary has sent to the castle."

"Has Mary written again?" said Mrs. Hazeldean. "I have made several efforts to know the girl, but she has always been too busy, as yet, to make new acquaintances. I hope they are not working her to death."

"Mary has nothing to do with this," said Sir Archie, sticking to his point. "I have come to you of my own accord, and for reasons of my own. I want you to take especial care of that girl for me."

"For you?" said Mrs. Hazeldean.

"For me," said Sir Archie, getting more earnest and quiet in his manner as he went on speaking. "Because, Aunt Margaret, some day when I have a good opportunity, when I have not quite so much care upon my mind, and when I have tried to pave the way towards some hope of success, I intend to ask that girl to be my wife."

Mrs. Hazeldean sat absolutely silent for the next three or four moments. Then she got up and came and stood beside her nephew.

"Archie," said she, with her hand upon his arm, "are you perfectly sane? My poor boy!"

"Quite sane, Aunt Margaret, and not a boy. That last is an important point for you to remember."

"But what does it mean, Archie? And who is she? And Janet——?"

"I will tell you what it means, and who she is, and about Janet," said Sir Archie. "Sit down again, Aunt Margaret, and let us be comfortable. I expect some little trouble at the castle, but I have counted upon you as my friend."

"Always, Archie; but, remember I am shocked."

"I know that; but I am going to make you easy in your mind. My mother, my sister, my aunt, have long been anxious for me to marry. Is that granted?"

"Yes."

"The lady they selected does not please me. I do not please her. The idea never did please Mrs. Hazeldean. Is that so?"

"That is so."

"Well, to-morrow I will have an interview with my mother for the purpose of assuring her that she must break off that absurd engagement, which never was more than a mockery. She made it, and she must unmake it. So far one difficulty will be disposed of. As to who she is, I will tell you; for I have made it my business to find out. Her father was an Irish gentleman, who died in banishment for his political honesty. If this be a disgrace, then many shining names are under a cloud."

"Disgrace!" said Mrs. Hazeldean.

"Well, I can tell you enough about her family when we have time. In the mean time another point has been established. And now, with regard to what is the meaning of it, I can only say I have thought of this ever since the first time—most certainly since the second time, I saw her. It is something all-important which has happened to me; that is all. You may say it is romantic, out of the ordinary course of things, anything you like. I can only say it is something which I hardly believed in, but have experienced and realised. I have passed by many women, and never felt inclined to turn my head to see which way they went. But now, why, I am so constantly looking over my shoulder that I can hardly see my way as I go along. There now is a confession for you, Aunt Margaret! You will understand about it better when you have closely observed her face."

"It is a good face," said Mrs. Hazeldean.

"A good face!" repeated Sir Archie, slightly provoked, "Well, as you say, it is a good face. Let that be."

"And the girl herself," said Mrs. Hazeldean; "how much does she know of all this?"

"Just as much as you knew an hour ago," said Sir Archie. "I will never enlighten her so long as she is in her present position under my roof. She shall not be annoyed and distressed, as she would be, as she must be. I will give myself a fair chance."

"A fair chance, Archie! Do you know some people would think you very odd."

"Maybe I am odd, Aunt Margaret. You ought to know."

"Yes, I ought to know."

"Well, I will never disturb her, until we have seen some way of changing her condition. When she is out of my mother's reach—for my mother will be angry for a time—and when she is in some more independent position, then I will set to work in my own way."

"And in the mean time? What is it that you want me to do?"

"I want you to have her with you as much as you can. I want you to know her; and I want her to know me here, and get accustomed to me. You will do this, Aunt Margaret?"

Mrs. Hazeldean rose from her seat, and stood beside him again.

"You are determined upon this, Archie?" she said.

"Quite determined, Aunt Margaret. If you refuse to help me I will set to work some other way. Only of course you will keep my secret for the present."

"I have never seen any reason to distrust your judgment," said Mrs. Hazeldean.

"Well, do not begin now. Will you promise me?"

"You must first give me a fortnight to buy a new gown, and have it made."

"A new gown!" said Sir Archie.

"A new gown," said Mrs. Hazeldean. "I must have an excuse for bringing her here at first. I must send for a fine new dress, and borrow Hester from the castle to make it up. When you see me wear that gown you may ask for my opinion of your plans."

FAR WESTERN LAWGIVERS AND PREACHERS.

Of course there must be a legislature as soon as a rude territory is organised, and somebody must "run" for it, and somebody be elected in all the divisions to sit in the local parliament, and all who are so chosen have the title of "honourable." Indeed, it seems as if in these parts of the world every government official, except the policeman, has this handle to his name. It does not always follow that these honourables are the worthiest men to be had, any more than it always follows that honourable members of the British parliament comprise the flower of our British intellect; but one thing is certain, in the West, at least, and probably over the whole of America, that the legislature is almost sure to contain the wordiest members of society; for to speak, or "make a few remarks" on something, is absolutely indispensable to a Western man.

In the wilder parts of the settlements members of legislature have often been elected, not so much for their talents, as for being "good hands at poker," or "great on a spree," and one of these ("the honourable gentleman from Mariposa"), on getting up to speak in the California legislature, and essaying several times without much effect, was greeted with shouts of "Git out. Oh! git out." They mistook their man, however, for, as one of his supporters remarked before his election, "He ain't much on the speak, but jist git him mad once, and he'll give 'em fits." "Look ye here, gentlemen," he remarked, cocking a Derringer pistol, "ye may holler 'Git out, git out' as long as God'll let ye, but my speech is already begun, and the next man who shouts 'Git out' in the house will bring to his ears the ominous click of small arms. What is it the gentlemen wish, and what would they have? Is my life so dear, or my peace so sweet, that it must be purchased at the expense of incapacitating a few on ye for milit*airy* service? No, sir-ee! I know not what course others would take, but as for me, I will finish my speech or there'll be a dead senator found round these premises in about fifteen seconds by the clock." He was allowed to finish at his leisure.

The late Dr. Henry, formerly surveyor-general of Washington territory, among the many genial stories he used to tell, and which still keep his memory green, had one at the expense of his territorial legislature. A hotel-keeper in one of the fashionable towns in the eastern states used to stand at the head of the table and read out the bill of fare in what the elocution teachers call a "clear articulate voice," though there was a printed carte on the table. This irritated his aristocratic customers until at last one said, "Say, Cap., why do you read out the bill of fare? Do you think we can't read?" "Oh, gentlemen," was the reply, "you will excuse me, I hope. It is solely the force of habit. I once kept a ho-tel in Washington territory, and most of the legislatoor boarded with me, and I'm blessed if half o' them could read or write!"

It is a matter of history that when the convention met to form a constitution for California, and on the usual preamble being read, "that all men should be judged by a jury of their peers," an Oregonian, who happened to be a delegate, moved, to the great amusement of the other members, that the word "peers" should be struck out: "This warn't a mon-*a*rchy—there warn't no *peers* in this here state!"

Disgraceful scenes of drunkenness are sometimes seen in these legislatures, but in this they do not stand alone. One of the Californian members of the United States Senate is distinguished as "the sober senator," such a virtue being rather uncommon in the present Congress men from that state. Corruption in these state legislatures prevails to a frightful extent, and is so open that newspapers will even have the hardihood to give a list of the sums paid to each senator for his vote. In the more refined states official embezzlements are styled "pickings," but in the Far West and Pacific states plain English suffices, and they are well known as "stealings." More than once prominent government officials have asked me, while in social intercourse, how much salary I got for such an office. I would tell them. "Wal," would be the reply, "that ain't much for this country, but of course you have got your *little stealings*?" I was naturally rather inclined to resent the insinuation of robbing my government or employers of any sort, until they would assure me that they meant no harm. It was the regular thing there, everybody did it. "Why, sir, do you think I can support my family on fifteen hundred dollars a year in greenbacks at sixty cents to the dollar, or that I would come up to this one-horse place after

having a practice as a lawyer in Fresco* of ten thousand dollars a year, for that? I guess not!"

All members of these legislatures are paid, and get, also, a certain mileage, or travelling expenses, from their homes to the seat of government. This recompense, or per diem, as they call it, varies from about ten dollars to fifteen dollars a day, and is generally paid in the Pacific states in gold. The mileage is about twenty-five cents a mile. Now this to a Congressman travelling from Washington Territory, Idaho, Oregon, or California, comes up to a very round sum, and, indeed, is looked upon as their principal pay, always exclusive of the little "stealings" formerly mentioned. The local legislatures are limited by the state constitution to a sitting of so many days (and it would be well if the British colonial ones were under the same rule, for their unpaid twaddle is endless), and, of course, their pay only extends over that period. Sometimes they will finish their work in a much less time than the law allows for their sitting, but they have no notion of rising while their pay is going on. When not engaged in the ante-rooms of the senate hall in playing "monte," "cut-throat poker," "encre," or "seven up," they can pass the time in introducing "bogus," or sham bills, generally a divorce for some of their own number, or a rule to show why another should not change his name, the wit and decency of which, I am told, are very much in the style of an institution once presided over in London by Chief Baron Nicholson. When Oregon was poor and humble, her rough names for her rivers and towns were good enough for them, but when she got rich a bill was gravely introduced to change these names. "Rogue river" was to be called "Gold river," gold just then being found on its banks, and so forth. It would probably have passed, had not another supplemental bill been introduced, which provided that "Jump-off-Joe"† should be called "Walk-along-Joseph;" that "Greaser's Camp" should be called "The Halls of Montezuma;" that "Shirt Tail Bar" should be styled "Corazza Beach," and so on. This fairly laughed the whole proposal out of court; though, indeed, on the official map an attempt was made to keep up some of these elegant appellations, and to Indianise the more outrageous of the names. In the way of legislative joking, it is a well-known fact that when a bill was introduced into the Georgia legislature to lay a tax of ten dollars a head upon all donkeys, a jocular member proposed to amend it so as to include "lawyers and doctors," which amendment was passed amid loud applause. Various attempts have been made to repeal the clause, but in vain, and to this day a tax of ten dollars is levied upon "all jackasses, lawyers, and doctors!"

In the Far West, as elsewhere, there are legislators who are not too much in earnest. I recommend to some of our present candidates for British suffrages the following noble close to a Far Western election address: "Gentlemen," said the candidate, after having given his sentiments on the "constitootion," the "Monroe doctrine," and such like topics, "gentlemen," and he put his hand on the region of his heart, "these are my sentiments—the sentiments, gentlemen, of a honest man—ay, a honest *politician*, but, gentlemen and fellow citizens, ef they don't suit you, *they ken be altered!*"

To appear a "plain sort of a man" on these electioneering tours is quite as necessary as the Old World baby kissing and shaking hands with the washed men provided by your agent are with us. I know a Western senator who keeps what he calls his stumping suit—hodden grey, well worn, but whole; shoes patched, but brightly polished; a shirt spotlessly clean, but frayed at the edges of the seams; and a hat which has seen better days, but in its well-brushed condition quite keeps up the air its owner is striving to assume—humble but honest. After a campaign is over, the suit is carefully put aside until another election in which its owner is interested. The worthy senator (who is rather a dandy than otherwise) has filled every office from governor to "Hog-reave," and considers that his suit of Humble but Honest won him many a vote. "Money would'nt buy it," he told me; "it ain't for sale *now how*."

It is commonly supposed that General Fremont lost his election out West by dividing his hair down the middle. The Honourable Samuel M. has often assured me that on his first candidature for office in Oregon territory, certain of the baser sort "voted agin' him 'cause of his puttin' on airs" in respect of wearing a white shirt, or, as they irreverently styled it, a "boiled rag."

I have put the State in the Far West before the Church; for the Church there is of the future, although every place is not like Josephine county, where I was told, with a sort of depraved pride, "There a'nt nary preacher nor meetin' house in this yer county, cap'n."

In other places, where the preacher gets a footing, it is sometimes easier to get a "meetin' house" full than to get wherewith to support the labourer who is nowhere in the world more "worthy of his hire." A preacher in a frontier settlement had been collecting money for some church object. There were still some twenty dollars wanting, and after vain efforts to make up the deficiency, he plainly intimated, as he locked the church-door one day after service, that he intended *to have* that said twenty dollars before any of them left the house. At the same time he set the example by tossing five dollars on the table. Another put down a dollar, another a quarter of a dollar, a fourth half a dollar, and so on. The parson read out every now and then the state of the funds: "Thar's seven and a half, my friends." "Thar's

* A common name on the Pacific coast for San Francisco.

† A place in Southern Oregon.

nine and a quarter." "Ten and six bits are all that are in the hat, friends and Christian brethren." Slowly it mounted up. "Twelve and a half." "Fourteen." "Fifteen." "Sixteen and three bits," and so on until it stuck at nineteen dollars and a half. "It only wants fifty cents, friends, to make up the amount. Will nobody make it up?" Everybody had subscribed, and not a cent more was forthcoming. Silence reigned, and how long it might have lasted it was difficult to say, had not a half dollar been tossed through the open window, and a rough explanatory voice shouted, "Here, parson, there's yer money; let out my gal. I'm about tired of waitin' on her!"

The "Long Tom Creek" region in Oregon is settled by a very rough lot of people, mostly from Missouri. They are (even in Oregon) a proverb for the uncouth character of their manners, and it was thought quite a missionary enterprise when a devoted young clergyman from "the States" came and settled among them. Church was a novelty with them. It reminded them of old times "in the States." They built a little church in the middle of a broad prairie, and for a time it was crowded every Sunday. The backwoodsmen and their families used to come to church in waggons and on horseback. The men had on fringed buckskin breeches and mocassins of Indian manufacture, and the head covered with coon-skin caps, with the tail hanging in the form of a tassel behind. They would tie their horses up to the long "hitchin' post" in front of the church, and always brought their rifles to church with them, handy for any "varmints" which might cross their path going and coming. It so happened one warm Sunday that the church door was opened, and a backwoodsman who happened to be near it was gazing vacantly out on the prairie in front. Suddenly he spied a deer, close by, quietly grazing. Here was a chance! Slowly he took his rifle from the corner of his pew and crept out. His action was observed, and one after another followed, until nobody but a lame old man was left. By this time the deer was ambling over the prairie, and the whole congregation of men yelling and galloping in pursuit. Preaching was out of the question, for even the women and children were as eager as the men, watching the chase half way over the prairie. The old man and the preacher stood alone together at the door of the church. The poor clergyman, in despair for the souls of his people, and thinking that he would have a sympathiser in the old man, who alone had not joined in the chase, sighingly said, "Lost, lost!" "Devil a bit o't, sir; devil a bit o't, they'll ketch it. By jingo, they've plugged it! I know'd they would!" The young minister received a haunch, and brought the service to a close; but he was out of his element, and soon "went East" again, where he is in the habit of remarking, with unnecessary acrimony, that "the Oregonians are a very careless people in heavenly matters!"

In the same part of the country, at a place called Candle Bridge, I saw a deacon preach. His sermon was not very remarkable for vigour, but I can vouch for it, that his squirting of tobacco juice over the pulpit rails was most forcible! I had noticed that for some seats next the reading-desk, the pews were unoccupied, though other parts of the church were crowded. After what I witnessed, I had no difficulty in accounting for the indisposition to sit under him, too immediately. If the parson is sometimes rough so are the parishioners! At church in a little backwoods settlement most of the congregation were asleep. Suddenly a half tipsy fellow made an apple bump on the bald head of one of the sleepers. The preacher stopped and gave the offender an interrogative stare. "Bile ahead, parson! Bile ahead! I'll keep 'em awake!" was the ready explanation.

The following incident has I think been told before, but still it is so characteristic that it is worth repeating. In California a miner had died in a mountain digging, and, being much respected, his acquaintances resolved to give him a "square funeral," instead of putting the body in the usual way in any roughly made hole, and saying by way of service for the dead, "Thar goes another bully boy, under!" They sought the services of a miner, who bore the reputation of having at one time of his career, been "a powerful preacher in the States." And then, Far Western fashion, all knelt around the grave while the extemporised parson delivered a prodigiously long prayer. The miners, tired of this unaccustomed opiate, to while away the time began fingering the earth, digger fashion, about the grave. Gradually looks were exchanged; whispering increased, until it became loud enough to attract the attention of their parson. He opened his eyes and stared at the whispering miners. "What is it, boys?" Then, as suddenly his eyes lighted on sparkling scales of gold, he shouted, "Gold, by jingo! and the richest kind o' diggins'—the congregation's dismissed!" Instantly every man began to prospect the new digging, our clerical friend not being the least active of the number. The body had to be removed and buried elsewhere, but the memory of the incident yet lives in the name of the locality, for "Dead Man's Gulch" became one of the richest localities in California.

GOSSIP ABOUT IRELAND.

"Altogether," said the man with the white whiskers, "the place in which I spent the happiest three or four days I ever knew in my life was Ennis."

"Ennis!" echoed the man with the wide-awake. "I don't remember ever hearing anybody talk of it before."

"Precisely," replied Whiskers, "and if you told the honest truth, you would confess that you did not exactly know where it was."

"Well, I admit——"

"Don't be ashamed of your ignorance. In a few years your case will be all but universal. Ennis, my good friend, is the county town of Clare, situated between Limerick and Galway, and forced upon the traveller's notice by the circumstance that it is the point at which the railway from Limerick breaks off; so that the rest of the journey to Galway has to be performed by an old-fashioned stage coach."

"But surely," objected Wideawake, "the travellers from Limerick to Galway must be tolerably numerous."

"They are," was the answer; "but the greater part of them avoid the short road which takes them to Ennis, and, going first to Kilkee, which is now a favourite watering-place, work their way along the coast to Galway, so as to get a view of the famous Cliffs of Morer."

"Then what you see, when you travel viâ Ennis, is not so very remarkable?"

"Not in the least, and what is more, when you stop at Ennis, you find nothing remarkable there?"

"And yet you like it so much?" exclaimed Wideawake, with more curiosity in his countenance than usually accompanies coffee-room conversation.

"Precisely; and it was precisely because there was nothing remarkable that the place gave me such infinite satisfaction. I had been travelling somewhat rapidly from point to point, and was fairly tired of sightseeing."

"You had been to Killarney, I suppose, and, of course, you admired the lakes."

"I did greatly; but do you know I was selfish enough to wish that the admiration for them had been less general. A ramble about those lovely lakes, and through the Gap of Dunloe must have been very delightful when they were sought by a chosen few, who picked their way about, took boats where they could get them, and now and then stopped at a hovel to rest their limbs and to recruit their failing spirits with that panacea for all earthly ills, a tumbler of goats' milk and whisky. But I now feel that amid the wild scenery of Killarney one is always oppressed with conveniences."

"Good hotels?"

"Capital hotels. At the one on the border of the Lower Lake there is a sumptuous dinner à la Russe every day, and a well furnished drawing-room at which all the gentry assemble in the evening, and for these and other luxuries the charges are reasonable. For a gay party, bent on self-enjoyment, and filled with a fashionable horror of being dull, I know not any place that could be more safely recommended than Killarney, with its abundant accommodation. The necessity of taking trouble, or even thought, for the sake of the picturesque, is altogether obviated. At the bar of the hotel you make your arrangement about omnibus, car, or boat, and you are provided for accordingly, merely adding another item, by no means unreasonable, to your bill."

"Well, I can hardly make out whether you are grumbling or pronouncing an unqualified eulogy," said Wideawake. "Your words are those of praise, but your look indicates dissatisfaction. Nor can I precisely ascertain the nature of your grievance. Surely, if you are so fond of going about in rugged loneliness, you can gratify your propensity with all the discomfort you so highly prize, and when you have had enough of voluntary inconvenience, take refuge in your elegant hotel."

"No, no, no," answered White-whiskers, impetuously, "that programme of yours is not to be carried out at Killarney, nor have I actually touched upon the convenience that I really find oppressive. No, my good sir, though I love a quiet coffee-room, like the one which we now occupy in this very unostentatious hostelry, where, after a certain hour, cigars are allowed, and one can enjoy a chat with a pleasant stranger like yourself"—(here Wideawake bowed)—"still I do not despise the dinner à la Russe, with its proper accompaniment of a choice wine list. But the attentions that crop up outside the hotels of Killarney, when you are really plunged into the midst of mountain and glen, are those that are to me pre-eminently distasteful. The guides, the guides, sir—the erudite in topography, the illustrators of the picturesque—these, sir, as far as I am concerned, become a weariness to the flesh. I am not unwilling that a man who knows the country, should show me the way to the choice spots, but I like not this man to expand into a procession. Riding on a pony is better than walking when you go through the Gap of Dunloe; but most disagreeable is a combat between two pony owners as to which has the best claim to your patronage, especially when it can only be settled by giving something to both. It is good when you are in a place noted for its echo duly to hear the curious repetition of sound, but you do wish to hear the experiment performed by the human voice; not by an indifferent fiddler, and three cannons fired at short intervals, especially when a fee is required for each separate performance; and you are more inclined than ever to lament your squandered sixpences when afterwards, on the Upper Lake you hear the echo which is associated with the name of Paddy Blake, and which is the best of all. A single brooch fashioned of the bog oak is all very well to take home as a keepsake for some esteemed friend, to whom it may recall the fact—no doubt highly interesting to him—that you were once in Ireland; but you don't want such a stock of brooches as would suffice to furnish a window in the Palais Royal."

"I understand all these grievances perfectly, but they do not scare me in the least," interrupted Wideawake. "You will perhaps despise me when I tell you that I am one of those easy fools, who, when they stroll through the streets of London, pitch a halfpenny to nearly every beggar they meet, and are therefore very properly regarded by magistrates as enemies to civilised society."

"Nay," warmly retorted he of the white

whiskers, "I am one of those easier fools who pitch a penny to quite every beggar whom they meet. I have no objection to mendicity when it takes the form of an appeal to benevolence; I do not even grumble if it seeks the aid of a little harmless fiction. But when mendicity takes the form of a right, as it does especially near the lakes of Killarney, my repugnance is excited. The guides evidently think that you are bound to be guided, and the venders of bog-oak treasures that you are bound to buy. The old-fashioned excuse that you have no small change in your pocket will not suffice. In the wildest spots about the Gap of Dunloe money-changers are to be found who make it their business to furnish you with silver and copper enough to meet the most various demands. Then the sudden change from poetry to prose!"

"What do you mean?" asked Wideawake.

"Look here," pursued Whiskers. "Did you ever in the course of your life chance to become acquainted with a man whom you looked upon as the pleasantest fellow in the whole world, till at last you had something to do with him in the way of business which altogether reversed your opinion?"

"More than once. And what makes the change especially disagreeable is this: that while you are disgusted with the man of business, the same man, who was so agreeable when he had no business about him, still lives in your memory, and seems to reproach you with fickleness."

"Exactly," said Whiskers, with an assenting nod. "Well, the change, which in commercial affairs takes place gradually, is wrought amid lake and mountain in the twinkling of an eye. While the excursion lasts, your kind instructor is overflowing with poetry, anecdote, and fun—a regular child of song. He knows all the legends that belong to one place, recites to you the verses that illustrate another, and is to the land of wild scenery what the well-informed verger is to the cathedral; with this difference, that the latter crams you with dry history, while the communications of the former are most fancifully decorated. But——" He paused.

"Well?" enquired Wideawake.

"But," continued Whiskers, "the excursion comes to an end, and before you part with your guide, a certain settlement has to be made. Here a difference of opinion respecting the amount of gratuity is sure to arise, some extra item creeping into the account, which was not contemplated when your preliminaries were arranged; and perhaps some boy, who performed some inferior service, and whom you did not notice, turns out to be a retainer of your intimate friend, with a special claim of his own. Now, during the discussion of this difference all the fanciful and genial elements of your instructor evaporate, and a sediment of a dull, business-like form remains; all the more repulsive because strongly impregnated with a flavour of ill-humour."

"Wicklow, they say, is as much noted for mendicity in various shapes as Killarney," observed Wideawake, with an inquiring look.

"Certainly not," replied Whiskers, "as far as Glendalough is concerned, which, with its stone churches and round tower is the chief show-place in Wicklow, and one of the chief in all Ireland. There the only exhibitor I found was an extremely civil, respectable, and unobtrusive old lady, who lived close to one of the ruined churches, and who loudly repeated a scrap of Moore's poem about the austerity of St. Kevin and the sad fate of the too-loving Kathleen, citing with particular relish the lines:

> Ah! the good saint little knew
> What that wily sex can do.

Nay, not only did she tell me how the druid used to go to the top of the round tower, and greet the rising sun with the salutation, 'Baal, Baal, Baal,' as I could find stated in my guide-book, but she explained to me the origin of a deer-stone, respecting which I was not blessed with similar information."

"What is a deer-stone?" asked Wideawake.

Well, the stone I saw, near one of the stone churches, was a fragment of rock, hollowed out at the top, so as to form a basin. The whole district is impregnated with legends of St. Kevin, as is Clonmacnoise, near the Shannon, which is likewise attractive on account of its seven churches and two round towers, with the fame of St. Kiaran. It appears that the good saint, taking compassion on the sorrows of some orphan child, who had been left without means of sustenance, so worked by prayer upon a female deer that she came to the stone, and filled it with milk for the nourishment of the infant. The marks of the child's fingers and knees are still to be seen on the rock, and the miracle has another marvel in the circumstance that water is always to be found in the hollow, and refuses to be entirely dried up."

"A fine, strapping, vigorous child that must have been!" ejaculated Wideawake.

"Suppose that the marks were gradually made by a succession of children. Thus, you will at once increase the probability of the story and the compass of the good saint's benevolence. By the way, St. Kevin always seems to have been on as good terms with the irrational creation, as the inhabitants of the 'Central World,' of whom I once read in All the Year Round. Once, they say, during the season of Lent, when he had retired to perform his devotions in a solitary place, and knelt in a state of ecstacy, the birds perched upon his arm, which they found more motionless than the surrounding trees. Nay, one of them placed in his hand the first twigs of her nest, and so deeply touched the heart of the saint that, lest he might disturb her in her innocent labours, he kept his hand still till summer came, and the young birds were strong enough to leave their nest."

"Very extravagant and very pretty," said Wideawake.

"My opinion, too," said Whiskers. "It is to a similar good understanding between the saints and the creatures debarred of speech that the existence of those beehives that are so frequently to be found in Ireland are to be attributed, if legend speaks truth. St. Dominic of Ossory, crossed over to Britain to study divinity under St. David, the patron of Wales, who was the head of a most important seminary, and his stay lasted for many years, during which the beehives of the abbey where he resided were intrusted to his care. The bees not only grew extremely fond of him, but seemed to be perfectly aware when he intended to return home, for no sooner had the day come that threatened to part them from their darling keeper, than they clustered round him in a mass and refused to leave. Three times he attempted to carry them back to their cells, but the attempts were vain, for the bees persisted in following him to his ship, and at last the abbot allowed him to depart with his winged retinue."

"And these were the first bees that ever settled in Ireland?"

"Precisely; unless, with some, you prefer to treat the legend as an allegory, and consider that the bees were, in fact, British teachers, who crossed the water laden with the honey of pious doctrine."

"To return to St. Kevin," said Wideawake, after a pause, during which he had been looking exceeding profound. "He must have been a man of very mixed character if he was so kind to orphans and birds, and yet so cruel as to give poor Kathleen the unlucky push, immortalised by Moore, which consigned her to the bottom of the lake, merely because she would not get out of his way. Do you recollect the words of the melody?"

"Certainly," replied Whiskers. "Moore had the very same idea as yourself with regard to the cruelty of the transaction. Thus sings he:

> Ah, you saints have cruel hearts!
> Stealing from his bed he starts,
> And with rude repulsive shock
> Hurls her from the beetling rock.
> Glendalough, thy glossy wave
> Soon was gentle Kathleen's grave.

"If you go through the history of the early Irish saints, you will find in them a strange mixture of an ascetic repugnance to the fair sex combined with much tenderness towards them. Saint Patrick himself is said in the first years of his missionary career to have allowed male and female devotees to live together in couples in a sort of spiritual union, without apprehending any danger to their vow of celibacy, until a scandal, which arose in his family, shook his belief in what would now be called 'Platonic love,' and caused him to separate the sexes entirely. The mixed feeling is remarkably illustrated by the legend of two early devotees, Enda and Fanchea."

"Enda and Fanchea? Which is masculine and which is feminine?"

"You shall hear," replied Whiskers, "Fanchea was a holy woman, the head of a monastery, to whose care was intrusted a maiden of royal blood. Enda was a warrior of lofty descent, who passing the monastery, where he had just slain one of his enemies, was stopped by Fanchea, anxious to prevent further bloodshed. He argued, as a warrior of the olden time naturally would, that by destroying his hereditary foes he was but honouring his deceased father; nor was he convinced, when she told him that his father was suffering in the other world for crimes, which he had no occasion to repeat. He affected, however, to negotiate, and informed Fanchea that he would comply with her pacific request if she would give up to him the royal maiden confided to her care. Fanchea appeared to hesitate, and having desired him to wait for her answer, returned to the chamber of the princess, and asked her whether she would become the bride of Enda, or die in a state of celibacy. The princess replying that she chose the latter alternative was desired by Fanchea to rest upon her couch, and immediately expired. Fanchea, covering the face of the corpse, requested Enda to come into the chamber, and then removing the veil, asked him if he desired such a wife as he now saw before him? The warrior replied that the maiden was no longer beautiful, and much too pale for his taste. This gave Fanchea a cue for effecting Enda's conversion. He soon became her disciple, and assuming the religious habit, fasted, laboured, and superintended the workmen who were completing the monastery. In vain did his old companions come to see him, Fanchea made the sign of the cross, and they became as motionless as the pagan warriors who saw the head of the Gorgon on the shield of Perseus. At last, however, a skirmish took place at the very gates of the monastery, between some men of Enda's family and a band of robbers, and Enda, yielding to the native Hibernian instinct, could not refrain from snatching up his sword and pressing forward to take part in the fight. He was, however, checked by Fanchea, who exhorted him to touch his shaven crown, and remember that he was no longer a warrior but a monk. He did so; the sword dropped from his hand, and he retired peaceably to his cell."

"All this is very pretty and very moral," observed Wideawake, "but I do not see that it illustrates the mixed feeling about which we spoke."

"Patience!" exclaimed Whiskers. "I have not yet come to the end of my tale. To prevent further temptation Fanchea advised Enda to quit Ireland, and study at the feet of a saint who presided over a great monastery in Britain, adding that it would be time for him to return when the fame of his virtues had reached his native island. Enda followed her counsel, and, after a lapse of some years, some pilgrims from Rome, passing by the monastery, spoke of a saint of Irish extraction, named Enda, who was head of a monastery in Britain, and had become very famous for his sanctity.

Fanchea, delighted, hastened with three of her virgins to the coast, and, flinging her cloak on the waves, was conveyed on it, as on a raft, to Britain. But Enda was now an abbot, and his nature had greatly changed; so when Fanchea, with her companions, came to the door of the monastery, he gave her to understand that she might either see his face or hear his voice, but that to see and hear was impossible. She chose to hear, and a tent having been pitched, Enda, veiling his face, conversed with her. Thus abruptly the story comes to an end, and so must our discourse, for it is getting very late. Perhaps we can talk about Ennis another time."

DUEL FIGHTING.

IN TWO CHAPTERS. FIRST CHAPTER.

Mr. Carlyle, in summing up the characteristics of the old French noblesse, gives them credit for having possessed one merit, such as it was: "a perfect readiness to fight duels." The authorities on the subject have recorded many curious stories. We will lay the authorities under contribution.

To begin with the time when the tide of revolution was on the flood. A certain young noble, M. de Servan, on taking leave of some court ladies to attend the opening of the States General in 1789, gallantly shook out his white cambric handkerchief before them, and said, "I shall bring you back half a dozen of those troublesome Bretons' ears." His first essay was upon M. de Hératry, whose cheek he stroked in a playful way. On being remonstrated with, he repeated the familiarity, and had his foot pounded beneath the Breton's heavy boot-heel in return. A duel ensued. The courtiers came in coaches and chairs, attended by servants bearing torches, to witness the reaping of M. de Servan's first crop of ears, instead of which they saw the unfortunate champion of feudalism, in the course of a few minutes, stretched dead upon the ground. Later, the noblesse are said to have leagued together, to get rid of the popular leaders in the National Assembly, one by one, by fastening quarrels upon them, and by systematically silencing their tongues and their pens by the skilful application of the requisite number of inches of cold steel. This was, however, too slow a method for the royalist Faussigny, who boldly proclaimed in the Assembly, that there was but one way of dealing with the ultra-patriotic party: "to fall sword in hand on these gentry there," meaning the members on the extreme left. Mirabeau, as has often been recorded, refused to fight until after the constitution was made, and used to content himself with observing to his challengers, "Monsieur, I have put your name down on my list; but I warn you that it is a long one, and that I grant no preferences." The Grange Batelière section prayed the Assembly to declare, that whoever sent or accepted a challenge, should be excluded from all future civil and military employment; and one of the Paris journals published the proposed form of a decree, according to the terms of which every member of the Assembly fighting a duel was to be excluded from the Assembly; and any speeches he might have made were to be removed from its records, and publicly burnt." A writer in the Observateur went so far as to demand, that all duellists should be branded on the forehead with the letter A (assassin). Patriots who refused to fight duels had their names printed in large type in the patriot journals; and the company of chasseurs of the battalion of Sainte Marguerite passed a resolution to the effect that "they would present themselves in turn at the sittings of the National Assembly, and would regard as personal all quarrels provoked with patriot deputies, whom they would defend to their last drop of blood." Citizen Boyer, however, went beyond this; he was prepared, Atlas like, to take the burden of all these quarrels on his own particular shoulders, and actually opened a bureau on the Passage du Bois de Boulogne, Faubourg Saint Denis, where the preliminaries of these affairs might be arranged, and whence he wrote to the journals that he had made a vow to defend the deputies against their enemies. "I swear," said he, "that neither time nor space shall shield from my just vengeance the man who has wounded a deputy. I possess arms that the hands of patriotism have fabricated for me. Every kind of weapon is familiar to me; I give the preference to none. All satisfy me, provided the result be death." After publishing this pot-valiant and sanguinary declaration, he presented himself at M. de Sainte Luce's, who had an affair in progress with young M. de Rochambeau, whereupon this nobleman put the bragging condottiere out at the door. In nowise discouraged by this insult, citizen Boyer formed a school, and enlisted a battalion of fifty spadassinicides (bully killers), and wrote again to the newspapers, renewing his professions of courage, and his threats of vengeance.

While the duels between the royalists and patriots were at their height, Gervais, the maître d'armes of Viscount de Mirabeau (Barrel Mirabeau as he was called by reason of his bulk and his powers of imbibition) used to pass his nights in training young aristocrats to spit patriot orators in the Bois de Boulogne, on the coming morning.

At the restoration of the Bourbons in 1815, scarcely a day went by without its hostile meeting in Paris, chiefly between the officers of Napoleon's army and those of Louis the Eighteenth's Body Guard, but also between the former and the various English, Prussian, Russian, and Austrian officers in the French capital. The Bonapartist officers would repair to the Café Foy, the rendezvous of Prussian military men for the sole purpose of picking quarrels with them; and, if the opportunity presented itself, they would insult English officers with equal readiness. Captain Gronow, known by his lively "reminiscences," who

was a dead shot, was walking with a lady in the Palais Royal, when a Bonapartist officer, a notorious duellist, after announcing that he intended to bully an "Anglais," proceeded to place his arm round the lady's waist. On being remonstrated with, he replied by spitting in Captain Gronow's face, and was instantly felled to the ground for his filthy impertinence. A meeting took place the following morning, the Frenchman bragging that he intended to add an Englishman to his list of killed and wounded. He fired, and singed his opponent's whiskers, and in a few seconds was shot through the heart. Gronow having afterwards to fight with the French officer's second, was content to wound his adversary in the knee—an act of forbearance which brought the captain no less than eleven challenges. The French Minister of War, however, interfered, and no more meetings took place.

One of the most celebrated of these duellists, the Count de Larillière, was a native of Bordeaux. He was at the time of my story a man of between thirty-five and forty years of age, tall, well made, and with polished manners; in short, his appearance utterly belied the good-for-nothing kind of life he was in the habit of leading. One day while he was walking with a friend, or, rather, an accomplice, in the most frequented street of Bordeaux, he saw approaching them, on the same side of the way, one of the richest and most honourable merchants of the town with his newly married wife upon his arm. When the young couple were within hearing, Larillière advanced courteously towards them, hat in hand, and with a smile upon his lips, and with all the outward semblance of a well-bred man, who is about to deliver himself of a speech of more than ordinary politeness. "I beg your pardon," said he, addressing himself to the merchant, who with his wife had abruptly halted, "but I have just made a bet with my friend, whom I have the honour of presenting to you," here he mentioned his friend's name and quality in due form, "that I will kiss your wife on your arm"—the husband, knowing the count's character and reputation, here became ghastly pale—"after having, first of all, given you a box on the ear." Saying this, the miscreant, stared impudently in the face of the amazed merchant, who was, however, still more amazed to find, spite of all the resistance he could offer, both threats put into immediate execution. A challenge and a meeting followed as a matter of course, which resulted in the injured party receiving his death wound, and the aggressor going forth in search of new victims.

After proceeding for some time in this course, Larillière was enabled to boast of having killed no less than eleven individuals; of those whom he had merely wounded, he took no kind of account. He had fought altogether upwards of forty duels and was bent upon making up his dozen, after which he proposed to rest for a time, and to continue his practice with the new cavalry sabre, to which, as being a far more deadly weapon than the ordinary small-sword, he had taken a strange fancy. This laudable desire of his was not destined to be realised, for he was himself killed in a duel, under rather strange circumstances, a few days after the death of his eleventh, and last, victim.

On the evening of a masked ball at the grand theatre at Bordeaux, Larillière was seated in an adjoining café, which he was in the habit of frequenting with the members of his own particular set. It was eleven o'clock, and our duellist, who had been for the moment abandoned by his ordinary companions, feeling in no particularly quarrelsome humour, was occupied in peacefully imbibing a glass of punch. Suddenly, a tall young man, wearing a black domino, and with his face concealed behind a black velvet mask, entered the café, and strode up to the table at which Larillière was seated.

None of the ordinary habitués of the café took any particular notice of the new comer on his entrance, as the masked ball, which was to take place that night, sufficiently explained his costume; but, no sooner was the mysterious visitor observed in the vicinity of Larillière's table, than all eyes were attracted towards him. Without a single preliminary observation he seized hold of Larillière's glass, threw away the punch it contained, and ordered the waiter, in a loud voice, to bring a small bottle of orgeat in place of it.

Witnesses of the scene say that, at this moment, for the first time in their lives, they observed Larillière turn pale. It was the common belief in Bordeaux that, during the fifteen years this man had been applying himself to the task of destruction, he had never once allowed his countenance to betray the slightest emotion. "Scoundrel!" he exclaimed to his masked adversary, "you do not know who I am," making, at the same moment, a vigorous, but unsuccessful, effort to remove the mask from the stranger's face.

"I know who you are perfectly well," coldly replied the unknown, forcing Larillière violently back with one hand. All present started to their feet, and, though no one among them ventured to approach the disputants, they contemplated, none the less anxiously, the issue of this strange provocation.

"Waiter," exclaimed the unknown, "be quick with that bottle of orgeat."

At this second command the bottle was brought: whereupon the masked man, still standing immediately in front of Larillière, who was foaming at the mouth with rage, proceeded to draw a pistol from his right-hand pocket. Then, addressing his adversary, he said:

"If in the presence of this company, and for my own personal satisfaction, you do not at once swallow this glass of orgeat, I will blow out your brains with as little compunction as I would those of a dog. Should you, however, perform my bidding, I will then do you the honour of fighting with you to-morrow morning."

"With the sabre?" asked Larillière, in a paroxysm of rage.

"With whatever weapon you please," replied the stranger, disdainfully. Whereupon Larillière swallowed the orgeat, with an expression of countenance as though it were to him the dregs of a bitter cup indeed, while every one present preserved a death-like silence.

The masked man, satisfied with the effect produced by his provocation, now retired: saying to Larillière as he did so, in a tone of voice loud enough to be heard by the lookers-on:

"To-day I have humbled you sufficiently; to-morrow I intend to take your life. My seconds will wait on you at eight o'clock in the morning. We will fight on the spot where you killed the young Chevalier de C."

This was the name of the count's eleventh victim.

The following morning, Larillière found himself in the presence of a man no longer wearing a mask, and who appeared to be some twenty-five years old. The seconds by whom he was accompanied, were two common soldiers, belonging to one of the regiments stationed in the citadel of Blaye. The bearing of the unknown was collected and dignified, and singularly resolute. His seconds had brought weapons to the ground, but Larillière's seconds took exception to them, at which a scarcely perceptible smile passed over the stranger's face.

On taking his position, Larillière turned towards the second nearest to him, and said, in an undertone: "For once, I believe, I have found my equal."

The combat commenced. At the first passes the count was confirmed in his opinion, that he had to deal with a skilful adversary. However, his courage did not fail him, though there were times when he seemed to lose his accustomed composure. Lunges and parryings succeeded each other with rapidity on both sides. Larillière, desirous of bringing the affair to a close, had already tried his finishing thrust two or three times, but only to find his sword turned aside by his adversary's blade. Harassed at finding his efforts unavailing, he insolently remarked to his opponent, "Well, sir, at what hour do you intend to kill me?"

There was a momentary silence, broken only by the clash of the two swords. Then the stranger, who seemed to have profited by that slight interval to assure himself that the advantage of the encounter lay decidedly with him, quietly replied to Larillière's last question, "Immediately." Saying which, he thrust the point of his sword between the ribs of his adversary, who sprang backwards, tottered, and sank into the arms of his nearest second. Putting his right hand to his wound, the count said, with difficulty: "That, sir, is not a sabre cut; it is a thrust with the point—with the sabre I feared no one." In a few moments he fell back dead.

The stranger now advanced politely towards the seconds of his victim, and inquired if he was at liberty to depart.

"Will you at least tell us your name?" asked they, in reply.

Larillière's opponent proved to be one of the young officers of the garrison at Blaye. When the fact of the count's death became generally known in Bordeaux, many mothers of families actually had masses said, in thankfulness to the Almighty, for having delivered them from so dreaded a scourge.

After this detestable count's death, there sprang up in Bordeaux a tribe of duellists, obstinately prepared to contest with each other the succession to that vacant post of infamy, which the count had for several years filled without a rival. Among these aspirants were two, more audacious and resolute than the rest, who eventually remained masters of the field of action, and for five years rivalled each other in effrontery and temerity, with the view of obtaining the coveted title of "first blade." In this strange kind of contest, in which each at times gave proofs of a laudable courage, they displayed no lack of artifice to impart to their more insolent provocations all the importance of a great scandal. One of the pair, an Italian by birth, but resident in France for a considerable time, and recently settled at Bordeaux, was the Marquis de Lignano, better known by the simple title of the Marquis. He was rather above thirty-five years of age; of a small, thin, weakly figure; and with a repulsive, sickly-looking countenance. He was excessively nervous and petulant. The sound of his voice grated most disagreeably on the ear, and it was impossible to look at the man while he was speaking, with his head insolently thrown back, without conceiving a strong prejudice against him.

The marquis handled his sword like no other individual skilful of fence; his lunges were lively, jerky, in fact, singularly rapid, and commonly mortal. He recognised but a single rival; only one foeman really worthy of his steel. This was his intimate friend, M. Lucien Claveau, who for the moment shared his glory, but whom he hoped some day to kill, and so peaceably to enjoy the succession of the deceased Count de Larillière. The inhabitants of Bordeaux, victims of the turpitudes of this pair of spadassins, on their part looked forward with interest to a contest which they knew to be inevitable, and the issue of which would be their certain deliverance from one or the other scourge. Meanwhile, the Marquis and Lucien Claveau seemed on the most intimate and agreeable terms.

Some few days subsequent to a meeting which resulted in the marquis killing his adversary (and which made a great noise at the time on account of the peculiarly unjustifiable act which led to it), Lucien Claveau, priding himself upon his brute strength, and jealous of his rival's reputation, resolved to outdo the marquis in some more than ordinarily extravagant proceeding. For this purpose he went one evening to the opera, accompanied by a friend and accomplice. Claveau, having slowly scanned the different individuals seated in the stalls, fixed upon the

particular person whom he would insult, and then sat himself immediately behind that person. The curtain rose for the continuation of the performance, and when the audience were eagerly listening to the singers, Claveau drew from his pocket a pack of cards, which he gravely proceeded to shuffle: watching all the while, with a fierce look, the slightest movements of the individual with whom he was bent upon picking a quarrel. His friend having cut the cards, he dealt to his friend and to himself, and this pair of spadassins commenced playing a game of écarté on the crown of a hat, as unconcernedly as though they had been in the card-room of their club. Suddenly, and precisely at the moment when the principal singer entered, Claveau cried out so that the whole house might hear him:

"I mark the king!"

A loud murmur followed this untimely exclamation.

"Silence!" shouted the predestined victim, looking round at Claveau and perfectly unconscious of the fate in store for him.

"I tell you that I mark the king!" roared Claveau, darting back on him a savage glance.

"And I tell you that you are an ill-mannered fellow," was the response.

At these words the duellist rose, and, in the midst of the clamour raised by the protests of the audience, gave a sharp box on the ear to the unhappy individual who had ventured to remonstrate with him. Addresses were, of course, exchanged, and Lucien Claveau quitted the theatre perfectly satisfied: for the outrage had been as public as possible. On the following day the duellist killed his man, and thought himself entitled to share the marquis's honours.

When the latter was informed of all the details of the quarrel, he called immediately on Claveau to congratulate him.

"What you have been doing is certainly rather remarkable in its way," said the marquis, "but I promise you I will hit upon something, better still."

"That is hardly possible," replied his friend, "unless we ourselves were to fight, and——"

"So, then, you, too, think of this coming about between us, do you?" asked the marquis, regarding his rival languidly.

"One day or other, I fear, we shall be compelled to fight," rejoined Claveau. "We shall be forced to take the step, sooner or later, I fancy, in defence of our reputations."

"My poor friend, I hope not!" exclaimed Lignano, grasping Claveau's hand with an affectation of tenderness.

"Dear old fellow!" responded the other, pumping up with considerable effort a hypocritical tear.

One can imagine a couple of hyenas, as they dispute in the night time over some dead body, interchanging such sickening expressions of sympathy.

"Ere long you shall hear me talked about," rejoined the marquis, on taking leave. Indeed he was not the man to allow Lucien Claveau to enjoy his triumph long. He was resolved to outdo his rival, and in a few days, had decided upon his plan.

THE LITTLE INNS OF COURT.

A MAN may have taken a nap much shorter than that of Rip Van Winkle, and, on awakening in this present October of eighteen hundred and sixty-eight, find himself a stranger to many parts of London. Say, for instance, that before his departure to the Land of Dreams, he happened to hold chambers in Lyons Inn. On returning to the Land of Real Life, he will probably desire to go home. But, although he have his latch-key safe in his pocket, he will be puzzled to find his outer door; his very staircase will elude his search; and, in fact, the result of his most vigilant voyage of discovery will be that the inn itself has no existence. True, indeed, it is that this time-worn and time-eaten institution has been swept off the face of creation—demolished with hundreds of surrounding edifices to make room for the new Palace of Justice, which one of these days will supersede the lodgings at present held by that impartial lady at Westminster. And now that it is no more, the question may well be asked, What did it mean by ever having been? And if the inquiry have interest in the case of a defunct inn, it may not be inappropriate as regards inns which are living, and show no signs of being otherwise—the little inns of court, in fact, whose relations to the inns of court proper are not very clear, and whose uses, except for the purpose of residence, are not easy to determine.

The inns of court proper, however, have an intelligible use. They are entrusted with the work of legal education, and supply us with our barristers at law. But the little inns, associated with the large inns, are "things that no fellow can understand;" and the "fellows" who least pretend to the task of comprehension appear to be the persons connected with their administration.

We gather this impression from the results of an inquiry made more than a dozen years ago by a royal commission upon the subject of the inns of court and legal education. The recommendations of the commissioners, involving as they do very important changes, it has not been found expedient to carry out, except in a very modified degree. But the information given about the little inns is rather amazing.

Take Lyons Inn for instance, which has just been swept away. Mr. Timothy Tyrrell, called as a witness before the commission, told all he knew about the institution. Being asked what was the constitution of the inn, he replied indirectly that it consisted of what he "believed" to be either members or ancients, but which he could not say; he "believed" the terms to be synonymous. No other class of persons had been connected with

the society for many years. With regard to the functions of the society there "appeared" to be none. A member or an ancient had only to do with the property, being elected to that combined dignity before a conveyance was made to him. With regard to the numbers of these dignitaries the witness said, plaintively, "There are only two of us left now." There were no fines, no dues of any kind, the only payment made being seven pounds thirteen shillings and fourpence (per annum it is to be presumed) to the Inner Temple for a reader; but there has been no reader since 1832. He never remembered a reader there. On consideration, however, the witness modified this statement, and added, "I think there was a reader there in 1815. I think I was at home from school, and attended with my father once; that is the only one I can recollect to have heard of." There was a hall. The witness was sure of that fact. But the members never met in it. It was opened only for the use of debating societies. There was a steward, and also a collector, the latter of whom collected the rents of the chambers, which were private property. The rents were received by the two ancients, who paid no rents themselves. There were no pupils or students. He had heard of dinners of the ancients in the hall, but thought that must have been as much as a hundred years ago. There was a kitchen attached to the hall, he was certain of that; but he had never heard of a library. Returning to the subject of the reader, he said he had heard his father say that the functionary, whom he thought he remembered as a boy, "burlesqued the thing so greatly" that the ancients were disgusted, and never asked for a successor. The greatest number of ancients whom he remembered was five. They were solicitors, like himself, but he did not think it was necessary for an agent to be connected with the law. Except the sum paid to the Temple, he knew of no disbursement in connexion with that profession; and he thought that the money paid to the Temple led to the inference that there had been legal instruction. But his father's "impression" was that the property was private. He knew of no record of an original grant. His father, he said, incidentally, died worth a great deal of property in the inn.

Of New Inn we have a much more intelligible account. Mr. Samuel Brown Jackson, attorney and solicitor, gave an actual statement of the present constitution of that society. It consists, he said, of four tables. The "Head Table," as it is called, is composed of the treasurer and ancients, the one being elected from the general body of the other. The next table is called the "Round Table." There is a third table called the "First Mess," and another table called the "Long Table." The latter is for persons who are simply members of the society. Members must hold chambers, and ought to be proprietors of chambers, but the rule is not strictly adhered to. Each member pays a fee of five guineas to the steward, of which three pounds five shillings is for stamps, and enters into a bond to the society. The steward receives the rents on the part of the ancients, who are trustees. The property is held under the Middle Temple, by a lease for three hundred years, dating from Midsummer, 1744, upon payment of a rent of four pounds a year. There are some conditions and trusts in the lease, one of which is that the ancients allow the Middle Temple to hold readings in the hall. The readings, however, ceased in 1846, the witness "believed" in consequence of the Middle Temple not continuing to send a reader. The lectures, when delivered, amounted to only five or six in the course of the year. The society has not now any provision for legal education of any kind. The witness knew nothing of any ancient documents throwing light upon the original constitution of the body. What documents there may be are "supposed" to be in the custody of the treasurer. There is no present source of income except the rents of chambers, which amount to eighteen hundred pounds or nineteen hundred pounds a year. The members are supplied with commons in hall by the society, during term, at a rate of payment less than the cost incurred. The nominal distinction of the four tables has ceased to exist in practice. The ancients dine at the round table, and the two lower messes are merged in one. The ancients have no duties except the administration of the funds. When elected, they have a set of chambers assigned them, for which they pay; and they enjoy the advantage of having the cost of their dinners defrayed from the funds of the society.

It does not appear from the above that the cause of legal education gains much more from the active conviviality of New Inn than from the "cold obstruction" of the departed Lyons. Let us see how Clement's Inn assists. Mr. Thomas Gregory, the steward of that society, described its constitution. It consists, he said, of a principal and an unlimited number of ancients and commoners, all solicitors. The principal and agents sit at the upper, the commoners at the lower, table; and the superior rank is recruited from the inferior, as occasion may require. The usual number at the upper table was nine, with the principal, and of commoners there were only six. The latter body have no privileges in the society except that of dining in hall, and paying for their dinners. What the privileges of the ancients are the witness could not say, except that they have the trouble of managing the inn. The society possesses no property but the chambers and the hall, which they hold in fee simple under trustees, among whom are several of the judges and vice-chancellors. The ancients have to qualify by buying a set of chambers, which they may sell again if the permission be endorsed on the lease. The income of the society, without the rent of chambers, is one thousand five hundred pounds a year. The contributions of the ancients average about twenty-five pounds a year. The funds are spent in repairing the inn, which is very old, and parts of it require renewing from time to

time. The witness had never known any surplus funds. With regard to the original creation of the society he was not able to afford full information, but he had seen papers relating to a period as far back as 1677, when there was a conveyance by Lord Clare to a person named Killett. Soon after that there was a chancery suit between Killett and the principal and ancients; and under the decree, part of the property (which was the part that Killett bought of Lord Clare) was conveyed to the inn. It was from that period that the society commenced its claim. "Have your documents been burnt?" asked a commissioner. "Yes," answered the witness; "and some of them we cannot read." The inn, he believed, was formerly a monastery, and took its name from St. Clement. The society was once in connexion with the Inner Temple, but he could never find any papers bearing upon the relations between the two hon. societies, "except," he added, "that a reader comes once a term, but that was dropped for twenty years; I think till about two or three years ago, and then we applied to them ourselves, and they knew nothing at all about it; the under-treasurer said that he did not know anything about the reader, and had forgotten all about it."

"Did you persuade them to send you a reader?" asked one of the commissioners.

"Yes," answered the witness; "they sent us three names as usual [this was the mode of proceeding which the previous witness said was once pursued in the case of New Inn] and we chose one; but then they said that the gentleman was out of town, or away, and that there was no time to appoint another."

This was certainly not encouraging to the society's efforts in the cause of legal education. But the loss does not seem to have been very great; for it appeared from a subsequent statement of the witness that the functionary in question, when attached to the inn, did nothing more than explain some new act of parliament to the principal, ancients, and commoners, there being no students in the society.

The financial arrangements seem to have been peculiar. The witness said that he had never known such a luxury as a surplus. On the contrary, looking back for a hundred years, he found that the ancients were always borrowing money; but on the other hand he found that they sometimes lent money "in order to pay certain things." There was a general cutting down of expenses from time to time, and latterly the principle was carried out to such an abject extent that the society dined together only once every term. When there were six dinners in a term the last day was called a "grand day," and then only was wine allowed—half a pint to each person. The inn, it further appeared, has no library and no chapel, but as a substitute for the latter it has three pews in St. Clement's Danes Church, and also a vault, where, the witness said, "any of the principals or ancients may be buried if they wish it." The society, he added, pay ten pounds a year to the rector of the parish, in the absence of a chaplain of their own. The last question was in reference to the class of persons occupying chambers. The witness stated that they were men occupying public situations, "one in the Tithe Office perhaps, others in banks." There were no students for the bar; "they would consider it derogatory to live in our inn; no counsel reside there." Rather an humble state of things this, for a society designed for the promotion of legal education!

Staples Inn was the next institution brought under the ordeal of the commission. It furnished two witnesses. The first was Mr. Andrew Snape Thorndike, the principal. With regard to the constitution of the society, he said that it consists, besides himself, of ancients and juniors, numbering eight and twelve persons respectively. The qualification for a junior is becoming a tenant of the inn; and this honour is open to anybody, whether an attorney or otherwise. But it is by no means to be supposed that a tenant would also be a member. If he wishes to be elected he has to apply to the pensioner, the name given to the treasurer, who is selected from the ancients and manages the affairs of the society under the principal. The privilege of membership, however, does not seem to be very great. The member is simply entitled to dine in the hall, upon what terms let the witness explain:

"Does he pay for his dinner?" asked a commissioner.

"Yes," replied the witness, "he does not pay us anything; he only provides some part of his dinner."

"The payment is actually made to the cook?" suggested the commissioner.

"Yes," replied the witness, "we have nothing to do with it. If they (the juniors) choose to have a piece of boiled mutton of the commonest order, or a rich dinner, they can have it; but they pay for it themselves, and it does not all come into the accounts of the inn."

So it seems that a society for the provision of legal education may be conducted very much like an eating house.

There is some dignity, however, in the arrangements. The junior, it appears, upon admission subscribes to a bond, which costs him about twelve shillings, for the payment of absent commons, and as an engagement not to bring strangers to sleep in the inn.

The ancients, it was further stated, are selected from the juniors, who are called from time to time from the lower to the upper table. The principal is elected from the body of juniors and ancients by the ancients and juniors together. An ancient must be qualified by having freehold chambers, for which he pays full value. The chambers, it was added, which compose the property of the inn, have not been obtained from the inn itself, but they have been held for a couple of centuries; they do not all belong to the inn. There is a curious provision with regard to the tenure of these chambers, which was thus explained: "A person holds

them for his own life, and though he may be seventy years of age, if he can come into the hall he may surrender them to a very young man, and if that young man should live he may surrender them again at the same age." In the event of a surrender not being made, the chambers lapse to the society. The rest of the chambers are let at a rack rent.

We are further informed that the members dine in hall three days in term and three days out of term. The dinners of the ancients are paid for from the funds of the society, and as the society has a cellar they have wine upon the same terms. The witness could not remember any time when the inn had a surplus over expenditure, as it had to pay off a mortgage on the property of eight thousand pounds. He was not inclined to think that the society had any connexion with an inn of court. The only connexion of which he was aware between it and Gray's Inn was that, when a serjeant was called from Gray's Inn, that honourable society asked the members of Staples Inn to breakfast.

Mr. Edward Rowland Pickering was the second witness. He avowed himself the author of a little publication upon the subject of Staples Inn. He did not recommend the work as an authority, however, as will be seen from his answers to some of the questions addressed to him.

A commissioner (apparently referring to the work) said: "You state here that in the reign of Henry the Fifth, or before, it (the society) probably became an Inn of Chancery, and that it is a society still possessing the manuscript of the orders and constitutions?"

"I am afraid," answered the witness, "that the manuscript is lost. The principal has a set of chambers which were burnt down, and his servant and two children were burnt to death, seventy years ago; and I rather think these manuscripts might be lost."

The historian of Staples Inn seems to have improved upon the practice of the Irish gentleman who wrote the theological work, and then proceeded to look up his authorities; for he is quite content to consider the authorities as having had a probable existence at one time or another.

In reference to the statement as to the inn being at one time an inn of chancery, the author of the work was asked if he knew himself of any trace of a connexion between the society and an inn of court. His answer is peculiar:

"Certainly, I should say not. It is sixty years since I was there, boy and all."

And it is in this way that history is written—as far as Staples Inn is concerned, at any rate.

In reference to the association of the inn with legal pursuits or legal education of any kind, the witness knew nothing. In his time—and we have seen that he had been connected with the society, man and boy, for sixty years—no attempt in such a direction had been made, and he had never heard of the existence of a reader or chaplain. He considered the inn a purely voluntary institution, and extra-parochial, because it had its pews in St. Andrew's Church taken away, and had never been able to get them back again.

The treasurer and secretary of Barnard's Inn, Mr. Charles Edward Hunt, gave some information concerning that society. It consists, he said, of a principal, nine ancients, and five companions. The principal and the ancients choose the companions, who must be solicitors and clerks in court. "We have two taxing masters," said the witness, evidently impressed with the dignity of the position. The companions are chosen when the principal and ancients so please. They never apply. One gentleman—contemptuously named by the witness as *a* Mr. ——, had the impertinence to apply for admission in 1827. "Of course we refused him," said the witness, "and he applied to the court, and after some difficulty he got a rule nisi for a mandamus. It came on to be tried before Lord Tenterden, and Lord Tenterden said it could not be granted; that we were a voluntary association, and the court had no jurisdiction.

This infatuated man, it seems, based his claims upon the ground that the inn was an inn of chancery, and that he ought to be admitted as a solicitor. The privileges to which he aspired, however, are not very great, consisting only of the right of dining in hall, and the chance, under particular favour, of being made an ancient. The advantages enjoyed by the ancients are simply "their dinners and some little fees." The principal is the only person who is allowed chambers, and he holds his office only for a term of three years. The inn is a very old one, and the property worth only one thousand pounds a year, of which two-thirds goes for expenses. The society holds under the dean and chapter of Lincoln, by a forty years' lease, and it pays a fine of one thousand four hundred pounds, whenever the lease is renewed. One of the commissioners suggested that three hundred pounds a year—something less than the third of one thousand pounds—would give more than one thousand four hundred pounds at the end of forty years. The witness admitted the force of the multiplication table to this extent, and added, "We dine in hall; it is a kind of convivial party." He stated in the course of his evidence that the inn was in debt. It further appeared that the property had been held under the dean and chapter of Lincoln for nearly three hundred years; the last renewal was in the year 1848. This was apparent from the books; but there was no trace of the original holding. The witness could not find, either, that there had ever been any student of the law connected with the inn. "The oldest thing I find," continued the witness, "is that a reader came occasionally from Gray's Inn to read; but what he read about, or who paid him, there is no minute whatever." He may be excused for not remembering when the reader last came from Gray's Inn, for he thought it was about two

hundred years ago. There is no library to the inn. There were a few books, but being useless, they were disposed of. The inn had once a pew in the parish church, but shared the fate of other learned but little societies in this respect, and was deprived of that facility for public worship after a contest involving considerable expense.

With regard to Furnival's Inn, we find no record of separate evidence having been received; but Mr. Michael Doyle, steward of Lincoln's Inn, stated that the latter society received five hundred and seventy-six pounds a year for the lease of the former property, granted to the late Henry Peto, for ninety-nine years—five hundred pounds for rent, and seventy-six pounds in lieu of land tax. How Furnival's Inn was acquired by Lincoln's Inn he was unable to state.

The above is the substance of all that has been officially set forth concerning the little inns of court, and their connexion with the large ones, or inns of court proper. Their origin, as may be seen, is involved in obscurity, and their association with the offices of legal education has long ceased to exist. Originally they seem to have held a position in reference to the great societies analogous to that of the halls or hostels of the universities. But the machinery has outlived the purpose for which it was devised. It is notable that the representatives of the little inns all plead poverty on the part of those they represent, and, judging from appearances, there is no reason to suppose that much money is made from the rent of the chambers, or even from the mild fees which are occasionally mentioned. And in any case such matters seem to concern nobody but those connected with the societies, who claim to administer private property, and may be allowed, we suppose, to administer it in their own way.

If they like to call themselves principals, ancients, commoners, companions, or what not, to dine together in halls, and to cling on to forms which have no practical meaning, who shall interfere with their innocent enjoyments? These enjoyments, and these only, it seems the aim of their representatives to defend; for the little inns make no pretence in these days to meddle with legal education, and it is only in connexion with their former functions that they are liable to incur present ridicule. There is no reason, therefore, why they should not flourish as they seem to do, and their dignitaries revel in the delight of *governing something* which is so dear to Englishmen whose boast is that they govern themselves. They at least let chambers to persons who are very glad of the accommodation; and if they can gain personal importance from such useful functions the public, at least, have no right to complain. Success, then, we say, to their dinners in hall, and their assumption of any styles and titles they may think proper. One of these days the little inns generally—like that of Lyons—will probably be improved off the face of the earth. But pending their fate in the future, we may at least give them credit for possessing some usefulness in the present, and some interest in connexion with the past.

LEAVES FROM THE MAHOGANY TREE.

A CUP OF COFFEE.

A French gastronomic writer of 1810 has left us a eulogy on coffee, which only a real lover of the berry could have penned. "It is," he writes, "a beverage eminently agreeable, inspiring, and wholesome; it is at once a stimulant, a cephalic, a febrifuge, a digestive, and an anti-soporific; it chases away sleep, which is the enemy of labour; it invokes the imagination, without which there can be no happy inspirations; it expels the gout, that enemy of pleasure, although to pleasure gout owes its birth; it facilitates digestion, without which there can be no true happiness; it disposes to gaiety, without which there is neither pleasure nor enjoyment; it gives wit to those who already have it, and it even provides wit (for some hours at least) to those who usually have it not. Thank Heaven for coffee, for see how many blessings are concentrated in the infusion of a small berry! What other beverage in the world can we compare to it? Coffee at once a pleasure and a medicine—coffee which nourishes at the same moment, the mind, body, and imagination. Hail to thee, inspirer of men of letters, best digestive of the gourmand—nectar of all men!"

When wondering what Frenchmen did before coffee, we must remember that tea in England, and coffee in France, only superseded long established and long venerated herb drinks and ptisanes, also in their way refreshing, restoring, and anti-narcotic:—just as tobacco only superseded, by its superior potency and excellence, herbs long before smoked, or taken as snuff, in Europe.

The old Arabian legend of coffee runs thus. Some centuries before the Norman Conquest, a certain Arab shepherd watching his sheep on one of the green hills near Mocha (a port on the Red Sea, near the heights of Bab-el-Mandeb) which slope down towards the yellow desert, being wakeful for fear of the lions, observed that those of his sheep that fed on the shiny leaves and brown split berries of a certain bush, also remained all night wakeful, lively, and alert. The shepherd, watching again and again, and always observing the same effect, steeped some of the berries in water, and found they had the same effect upon him. Gradually (the laws of patents being then rather unsettled), the secret spread into the desert, and the new drink, cavy or cavey, became popular in the black tents of the wandering Ishmaelite.

In time, much as tea had been first used to drive away wicked sleep from the eyes of Chinese hermits, coffee became used by the holy men of Arabia and Egypt. There also arose a very hot and disagreeable controversy in the Mosques, whether coffee came under the ban pronounced by Mahomet against certain liquors, especially wine. The Cairo Mullahs fell a wrangling about this point of doc-

trine; and on one occasion, after an anti-coffee sermon, the pro-coffeeites and the anti-coffeeites fell to blows, turbans were knocked off, teeth were violently extracted, central tufts of hair were violently torn away, and many severe kicks and blows with turned-up slippers were administered to the less active of the followers of the true Prophet. But eventually the fanatical haters of the infusion of the Mocha berry, died out, or were bought over by sacks of the sinful fruit, and the East gave in, with one voice, its allegiance to the new beverage.

But many antiquaries contend, and apparently justly, that coffee (first generally used in Persia) was not in great repute in Arabia until the reign of Henry the Sixth. Thence it passed to Egypt and Syria, and in 1511 to Constantinople, where public coffee-houses were first opened in 1554 (reign of Mary). Lord Bacon, whose learning was so varied that he seemed to be "not one but all mankind's epitome," mentions coffee in his Sylva Sylvarum as a Turkish drink, black as soot, and of a strong scent, to be taken when beaten into powder, in very hot water. The Turks, he says, drink it in their coffee-houses, which resemble our taverns. Burton also mentions it later, in King James's reign; and no doubt Levant travellers had then begun to talk and write about coffee as a pleasant and refreshing beverage after food or after fatigue. In 1641, a young Cretan gentleman entered himself as student at Balliol College, Oxford, and introduced the new Turkish drink among his begowned colleagues.

In 1650, the year after Oliver became Protector, and grew more powerful than any crowned king then in Europe, one Jacobs, a Jew, opened a coffee shop at the Angel, in the parish of St. Peter in the East, Oxford. Two years later, Pasqua Rosee, a Dalmatian, from Ragusa on the Adriatic, coachman to Mr. Edwards, a Turkey merchant who had brought him from Smyrna, opened a coffee-house (the first in England) by his master's wish, in St. Michael's-alley, Cornhill. Pasqua Rosee's first hand-bill, headed

"THE VIRTUE OF THE COFFEE DRINK,"

claims for the new beverage (drunk generally throughout all the Grand Seigneur's dominions) all the virtues of a quack panacea; it corrected crudities (this was the medical jargon of the day; the hand-bill was, no doubt, written for Rosee by some half-starved apothecary); "it dried the system without heating or inflaming it; it fortified the inward heat, and helped digestion; it quickened the spirits and made the heart lightsome; its steam was good for sore eyes; it suppressed inward fumes, therefore cured headaches, and dispersed defluxions and rheums that distilled upon the lungs. It dried up dropsy, gout, and scurvy, it was beneficial to people in years and children with the king's evil. It was a great remedy against the spleen and hypochondriac winds. It prevented drowsiness and made one fit for business. It was neither laxative nor astringent, and it made the skin clear and white." Such were the bold assertions of Pasqua Rosee, the Ragusan coachman.

The vintners and tavern-keepers, and the men about town, who liked their fiery Canary and their strong French wines, were very angry at the new beverage. And the wits launched their pen-darts at Rosee hotly and sharply.

The Grub-street poet wrote some rough-hammered verses, which began:

> A coachman was the first (here) coffee made,
> And ever since the rest drive on the trade.
> "Me no good Engalash," and sure enough,
> He played the quack to salve his poison stuff.
> "Ver boone for de stomach, de cough, de pthisick,"
> And I believe him, for it looks like physic.
> Coffee, a crust is charred into a coal,
> The smell and taste of the mock china bowl,
> Where huff and puff they labour out their lungs,
> Lest, Dives like, they should bewail their tongues.
> And yet they tell you that it will not burn,
> Though, on the skin, the blisters do return,
> Whose furious heat does make the water rise
> And still through the alembics of your eyes.
>
> * * * * *
>
> And, now, alas! the French have credit got,
> And he's no gentleman that drinks it not.

There can be no doubt that there was at first a good deal of quackery and nonsense talked about coffee, and that what with the absurd injunctions to drink it scalding hot, and the ridiculous practice of holding the head in the steam to benefit weak eyes, the satirist and cynic must have had fair scope for their bitterness and sourness in the Cornhill coffee-house, over whose door hung a representation of the brown visage of Pasqua Rosee.

A penny at the bar, and twopence a cup—newspapers and lights included—were the early coffee-house charges. Some old rules in verse for a coffee-house wall, are still preserved. They enjoin a fine of twelvepence for swearing, and a forfeit of a dish of coffee all round for beginning a quarrel or for toasting a friend in coffee. No wagers were allowed to exceed five shillings.

The second coffee-house, according to authority, was the Rainbow, by the Inner Temple gate, kept by James Farr, a barber. His neighbours grew jealous, and in 1657 he was "presented" as a nuisance, for having annoyed his neighbours by the smell of scorched coffee, and having set his chimney and chamber on fire, to the "general danger and affrightment." In 1660 the returned cavaliers were severe on the rival of wine, and a duty of fourpence was levied on every gallon sold. An act of 1663 directed all coffee-houses to be licensed; in 1675 there was a short-lived proclamation closing the coffee-houses as seminaries of sedition.

The enemies of the new Turkish drink accused it of the most horrible and baneful results. The old men lamented Ben Jonson's times, when men were men, and tossed off canary. A lampooner of 1663 writes bitterly:

> These less than coffee's self, these coffee men,
> These sons of nothing that can hardly make
> Their broth for laughing how the jest does take;
> Yet grin, and give ye for the vine's pure blood
> A loathsome potion—not yet understood,
> *Syrup of soot, or essence of old shoes,*
> Dasht with diurnals or the book of news!

What moral lessons to the Chinese these struggles of new customs are! Were nectar introduced to-morrow to supersede tea, the same old story would be repeated.

Coffee was not introduced into France until twelve years after its first use in England. In 1662, Thevenot, the Asiatic traveller, brought it to Paris, then heedless of its good fortune. It soon spread among the gay natives, but it had its enemies—the friends of beer, wine, and old customs. Delightful Madame de Sévigné, who died in 1696, used to predict that Racine and coffee would both soon be forgotten; but coffee "avait les racines trop profonds et tout le monde sait le profondeur de Racine."

In spite of the venerable Arabian goat story, the real inventor of coffee was the great creature who first thought of roasting the berry. It is this process of carbonisation that developes the aroma and generates the oil. To make good coffee the operator must act (however unconsciously) on three grand principles of medicine and chemistry.

He must first learn that exact moment in roasting, when the odoriferous principle shall be at its climax, lest a livelier heat dissipate it for ever. He must obtain the liquid so concentrated that it contains unimpaired all that aroma which is its life and soul. He must carry on his manufacture, so that all the final principles of the berry, the harsh and astringent properties, shall remain undeveloped and unmixed with its finer essence.

These are great chemical principles which require a theoretical knowledge and a learned experience not to be expected from a mere hireling cook. Endless experiments have been made with coffee, to extract its full power and yet repress its baser properties. All sorts of finings have been used, beginning with sole-skins. It has been made without roasting the berry—without crushing the berry—with cold water—it has been made by boiling for three-quarters of an hour, &c. As the Japanese differ from us in grinding their tea (a very great economy), so the Turks differ from us in pounding their coffee. They do not use a grinding mill, but wooden mortars and wooden pestles, and the drier these instruments are, and the more impregnated with the aroma, the more valuable they are considered. Those of our readers who have gone up the Nile, will remember that dull continuous thump which used to rouse them from their narrow beds, at that early hour when the long files of cranes and wild geese on the low sandy shore, drawn up as if for inspection by the king of the birds, all looked like flamingoes in the rosy light of daybreak, that turned the pyramids long left behind, to little triangles of pale ruby. If they then peeped out at the front cabin door they will remember that while half the crew were in the Nile up to their black chins, shoving the dahabeeah off one of the incessant sandbanks, Achmed, the ship's boy, a great lubberly stalwart fellow of seventeen, was sitting crosslegged in the head of the boat, with a wooden mortar between his knees, and that he held in his dusky hands, a small tree five feet long, rounded to a club at one end, with which he was pounding the close-grained berries.

Brillat-Savarin, tried the Turkish plan of pounding coffee, and found the result far preferable to coffee which had been ground. To illustrate the strange and unaccountable effects of different modes of chemical manipulation, he tells, in his suggestive way, an anecdote.

Napoleon (the Great Napoleon), like most Frenchmen, was fond of eau sucrée (sugar water.) "Monsieur," he said one day, to the celebrated chemist Laplace, "how is it that a glass of water in which I melt a lump of sugar, seems to me so much better than that in which I have put the same quantity of crushed sugar?" "Sire," replied the savant, "there are three substances of which the bases are exactly the same. Sugar, gum, and amidon. They only differ in certain conditions, the secret of which is reserved by nature. I think it is possible that in the collision of the crusher some portions of sugar pass to the condition of gum, and cause the difference which you have observed."

Crushing coffee in the same way may produce some slight but beneficial change—may expel some element, or call forth some essence, which the grinding wheel does not affect.

Brillat-Savarin, after trying many ways of making coffee, settled down on a sort of percolator, the Dubelloy. His principle was to pour boiling water through coffee lightly placed in a porcelain or silver vessel pierced with fine holes. The first decoction was then heated to ebullition, passed again through the coffee, and a clear and rich brown liquid obtained with as full an aroma, and as near perfection as possible.

Dr. Forbes's plan (patronised by Mr. Walker, of the Original) was not very dissimilar. He first selected coffee imported in small parcels, coffee in bulk often heating and becoming impaired. Coffee should always be roasted and ground on the day when it is used, and when that is not possible it should be kept in a glass bottle with a ground stopper. The best mode of roasting, is in a frying-pan over the fire, or in an earthen basin placed in an open oven: the berries to be frequently stirred. The flavour of the coffee roasted in this exposed way, is said to be finer than that of coffee roasted in a closed cylinder. Dr. Forbes used a biggin with two cylinders—the one above the filter, the other below the receptacle. It was first rinsed with hot water, then the coffee powder was put in: a full ounce for every two cups. The measured boiling water was poured lightly in, through a movable colander. As soon as it had run through, the clear bright coffee was ready.

The French heat their coffee, when filtered, to boiling point, then fine it with fish-skins. The water they use, is generally first mixed with coffee grounds and boiled: otherwise it remains raw, and the infusion is not perfect. It is attention to these thoughtful refinements that makes French coffee so good; it is a stupid neglect of them that makes ours so bad. The rude process of making tea, the mere splashing in of

water, too often half-warm, on a handful or two of sloe-leaves and dust, suits our peculiar attribute: a barbaric indifference to the intellectual gratification of the appetite and digestion.

The old French way of making coffee, before 1805, was to put the powder in boiling water, to warm it over the fire to boiling point, then to take it off and let it settle, clarifying it with isinglass or fish-skins, and decanting it before serving. Café à la Grecque was passed through a pointed bag. But a certain wise man, M. de Belloy, nephew of the venerable Cardinal, who, in 1805, was Archbishop of Paris and the Nestor of the Gallican Church, at last discovered that the old plan was a bad plan. He found that coffee lost in the various boilings, its aroma, force, and spirit. The ebullition carried away further virtues, and the fish-skin and bag gave it a foreign taint unpleasant and injurious. Belloy took the matter seriously to heart, and in a moment of inspiration devised the percolator. He also took care never to let the coffee-roaster burn his coffee-berries, for even one burnt berry rendered several pounds of coffee, bitter and acrid. He never allowed him to roast it till it was black, and chose a golden blond colour rather than brown as his ideal. The Café sans Ebullition was patronised by M. Foulquier, proprietor of the Café des Etrangers in the Palais Royal, and soon became popular, thanks to the zeal of Dr. Gastaldy, an enlightened physician and profound gourmet of those days.

Ude, the great chef at Crockford's, used to allow one cup of coffee powder, to make two good cups of liquid. He poured boiling water into the biggin on the coffee, considering it equally infused when it began to bubble on the surface. He then placed the bottom of the biggin in a bain-marie, or vessel with boiling water, to keep the coffee hot. He used as a filter, a bag of thick flannel, as being better than tammy. His one rule was a true French one. He says:

"Coffee can never be too strong, and may always be diluted with boiled cream. Weak coffee is never worth drinking."

Ude could make coffee (as he used to do by request before Count d'Orsay, Lord Vernon, Lord Allen, &c.) better and quicker than any one, notwithstanding, as he writes pathetically, "the contradictions that I have experienced in the St. James's Club from some noblemen who have certainly made a vow never to be pleased, however well they may be served."

In 1805 French medical men strongly denounced the fondness of the ladies of Paris for café au lait for breakfast. It made them sallow and heated their blood; it was supposed by the faculty to be eminently bilious, and as unwholesome as café à l'eau was beneficial.

It was about 1810 that it began to be observed that coffee was becoming a great article of consumption in France, especially in Paris: about that time it had already supplanted the vin ordinaire at the usual breakfast of the artisans, ouvriers, and even the mere street labourers. Those burly women of the Halle—the retailers of herbs, fruits, vegetables, and fish, who had once followed the drums to Versailles—now began to be seen between the pillars of the Rue de la Tonnellerie at an early hour with great saucers full of hot coffee, in which they soaked great chunks of bread

The amount of coffee supply, which had been found sufficient for thirty years before this, had now become quite inadequate. In Germany, and all through the north of Europe, chicory root began to be openly sold. In Flanders, vast fields of this plant were grown, to be dried, roasted, and mixed with coffee. In some Flemish villages more than a million of francs was annually realised by this. It began to be known in Paris about 1790, and it was found that two-thirds of the swindling powder could be mixed with good coffee, without fear of detection. The root, at all events, is harmless, and should be avowedly mixed with coffee, to lower its price; if secretly mixed, a paternal government like Turkey would not hesitate a moment in nailing the rascally retailer's ear to his own doorpost. The cheat of chicory did one good thing: the grocers ceased to mix roasted rye with their coffee, and substituted the Flemish plant.

Before the Revolution, the French used to be fond of a pinch of vanille in their coffee; but in the First Consulate time the great European wars prevented the fruit capsules of the precious orchis from reaching France by way of Spain. Some shrewd energetic epicures of a practical tendency soon found a substitute for vanille. They took a handful of oats, and boiled them for five minutes in rice water. This water was then removed, the oats were boiled again for half an hour, and the decoction was then strained through a bag of thin muslin. This water, used for coffee-making, gave the beverage a vanille flavour. This was the discovery of M. du Moulin, maître d'hôtel of the Count de Barruel de Beauvert. The vanille coffee was found to cheer the mind, and to fatten without heating the body. Owing to the war, vanille husks were at this time, in Paris, two hundred francs the pound.

In 1810, two Parisian chemists invented a conserve de café, an essence of coffee. Two spoonfuls made a four-ounce cup (ordinary size); it merely required to be mixed with boiling water and sugar. Coffee was then from five to six francs a pound. The essence was thought inferior to good Levant or Martinique coffee; but better than the inferior sorts. One of these discoverers, M. Lamerque, a Bordelais of the Rue de Bac, also extracted from coffee, an essential oil, balsamic and cephalic; he invented, too, a liqueur, which he called The Cream of Mocha Coffee, and coffee bon-bons, which were white, and of a tonic quality. Coffee was at this time much used by the Parisians to flavour creams, ices, and sorbets.

"Original" Walker, writing in 1835, strongly upheld the superiority of tea to coffee when travelling. Tea allays fever and thirst, he says, and coffee causes both. Coffee increases the natural fever of travel. The French, he observed, drank it at breakfast drowned in hot

milk, and after dinner took it *black*, but in a very small quantity. If an Englishman call for coffee in a French or Italian night journey, he wants a whole soup-basin full. He likes a draught such as he would have taken of tea at home. There is no doubt, however, that our workmen begin to prefer coffee to tea, and find it stimulate the circulation and nourish more than the infusion of rank Congo, or of that dark woody Assam that is now much used for adulterating and strengthening inferior teas. After all, do let us think of this: two breakfast cups of tea or coffee represent a pint of hot water poured into the ever receptive and long-suffering organ.

Brillat-Savarin, who, if he had not been a great gourmet, would have been an eminent psychologist, has most ably summed up the peculiar effect of coffee on the powers of the brain. The effect is sometimes modified by habit, but there are many persons in whom excitement is always produced. Some persons are not kept awake by coffee, and yet require its influence to keep them from sleep during the day: being sleepy all the afternoon if they do not have their usual morning coffee.

The sleeplessness caused by coffee is not painful; it consists merely in the perceptions being very clear, and there being no desire to sleep. One is neither agitated nor miserable, as when sleeplessness comes from any other cause; but that does not, nevertheless, prevent the unseasonable excitement from being eventually hurtful. Savarin recounts a special occasion when coffee had an extraordinary effect upon his brain and nerves. A certain duke, then minister of justice, had given him some work to do, which required great care. There was little time to do it in, for the duke wanted it next day. Savarin, therefore, resolved to work all night. In order to fortify himself against the desire to sleep, he finished his dinner with two large cups of strong and excellent coffee. He returned home at seven o'clock to receive the papers he had expected, but found, instead, a letter which informed him that, owing to some absurd formality of the bureau, he could not receive them before next day. Thus disappointed, Brillat Savarin returned to the house where he had dined, and joined a party at picquet: not without inquietude as to how he should pass the night. He retired to rest at his usual hour, thinking that even if he did not sleep well he might get a doze of four or five hours which would help him quietly on to the morrow; but he was deceived; hour after hour brought fresh mental agitation, until his brain seemed like a mill whose wheels work without having anything to grind. At last he got up, and, to pass the time, began throwing into verse a short English story he had lately read. As sleep still refused to come, he began another translation, but all in vain; the mine was exhausted, and had to be left. He passed the night without sleep, and rose and spent the day in the same condition, neither food nor occupation bringing any change. Finally when he went to bed at his accustomed time, he calculated that he had not closed his eyes for full forty hours.

This great epicure closes his remarks on coffee by speaking of its strength. A man with a good constitution, he says, might live long, even when taking two bottles of wine a day, but if he dared to venture on the same allowance of coffee he would soon become imbecile, or waste into a consumption. He warns parents against giving it to young children, and mentions a man he saw in London "sur la Place de Leicester," who had become crippled by his immoderate use of coffee, but who had come down again to five or six cups a day.

The quantity of coffee imported into England in 1843 was twenty-nine million nine hundred and seventy-nine thousand four hundred and four pounds; in 1850, thirty-one million one hundred and sixty-six thousand three hundred and fifty-eight pounds; in 1857, thirty-four million three hundred and sixty-seven thousand four hundred and eighty-four pounds; and in 1859, thirty-four million four hundred and ninety-two thousand nine hundred and forty-seven pounds.

There can be no doubt that as our poorer classes learn to study cooking, and become convinced that good cooking leads to good appetite, and good appetite to good health, they will attend more to those refinements which remove coffee from the category of brown soup, and place it high among the most favoured beverages of the world.

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HESTER'S HISTORY.

A NEW SERIAL TALE.

CHAPTER XVIII. MRS. HAZELDEAN GETS A NEW GOWN.

"WELL, I must say you need a handsome dress, Margaret!" said Lady Helen. "I am glad to find you getting so much more like other people as to think of it. I shall be very pleased to lend you our young dressmaker for a week or so. You may trust her with anything. She is a most efficient person."

"What are you going to have," asked Miss Madge, in an ecstasy of interest. "Have cerise satin—so useful for dinner. Not very serviceable to be sure, but then a little French chalk is such an excellent thing for gravy stains."

"Thank you, Madge," said Mrs. Hazeldean, laughing; "but I believe cerise satin would take away my appetite."

"Would it now?" said the Honourable Madge, quite shocked. "Well, do you know I think I always eat better when I have a lively bit of colour about me."

"I hope you will smarten her up a little," she said to Hester. "It is a great opportunity for her, and I hope you and she will both take advantage of it. She wears very good materials, you know, my dear," said poor Madge, sighing, and feeling her own flimsy gown between her finger and thumb. "She is ladylike, I must say; but she selects such dowdy colours, and she has no regard at all for Paris style. She has all her gowns made high up to her throat, and she never puts a bit of powder in her hair. She means well, I am sure, for she is good, you know, my dear, as good as gold; but it's a pity to see her waste herself as she does. For she is handsome, is Margaret, though Helen don't see it.

"I shall miss you sadly, my dear. I have no relish now for the solitude of my own chamber, which used to please me vastly—for ten minutes or so at a time. There is no one else in this place who enters into the ideas that prey upon my mind. Yet I do not grudge you to her if you improve dear Margaret. You are a lady, my dear, and no one pretends to deny that. You must show her a good example. Take some of your pretty gowns, and wear them under her nose."

"No, Miss Madge," said Hester, "I will lock them all up in my trunk, and I have half a mind to lose the key. I am sick of pretty gowns. I believe I shall never wear anything all my days but a very old plain frock. When this gets threadbare"—looking at her sleeve—"it will be very nice. I think when I get time I will have a piece of sack-cloth and make myself a new dress. I am tired of your pinks and your greens, your satins, and your gauzes."

The Honourable Madge stood transfixed for a few moments in silence.

"My dear," she said, presently, "with such ideas in your mind, I cannot think where your genius came from."

And then she went away sorrowful, disappointed in her favourite.

So it had been arranged that Hester was to be lent out to Mrs. Hazeldean. The evening before her departure for the village, Lady Helen and Miss Golden drove away to dine somewhere at a distance; but they had not been gone above two hours when Miss Janet walked into Hester's tower-room with all her magnificent dining paraphernalia removed, and a dressing-gown thrown over her muslin petticoats.

"On such a night to be sent home again, after enduring to dress in the cold!" she exclaimed, with her chin raised to the extreme angle of pique and indignant vexation. And no wonder she was vexed. She had gone to the trouble of doing away with her pretty dark curls, in place of which a snow-white edifice, ornamented with roses, had been erected on her head. And I must say that her face looked very charming underneath it, surmounting her long wrapper of rose-coloured flannel.

"A pretty country to live in, if it is not safe to drive a few miles along the road at night!" continued Miss Janet. "I don't believe in it, for my part. I think the whole fuss has come of Sir Archie Munro's talent for ordering about, and protecting, forsooth! Not safe, indeed! Why, I never knew the people anything but civil and good-natured. And if it be not safe to drive a few miles along the road, what a nice prospect for my getting home to England!"

Miss Janet seated herself in Hester's low arm-chair by the fender, and made herself as comfortable as she could.

"Give up fidgetting about, do, and come

and sit down and have a talk," she said to Hester. "What makes you so shy of talking to me, I wonder, when I am always telling you my concerns? It is a perfect relief to me sometimes to pour them out upon you. There is something so demure about you, as if you would not repeat a word for the world; and yet you contrive to let so much sympathy out of your eyes as to keep one going on! I'll promise not to say one word about dress, and you couldn't have a better offer than that in this place! Neither Miss Madge nor my Lady Helen would treat you half so liberally."

So Hester sat down with idle fingers and delivered herself up for the hour into Miss Golden's whimsical hands.

"It will be insufferably dull here, you know, for me during the next week," said Janet. "I do think I should have run away long ago if you had not arrived. And it is getting more stupid every day with us down below. I really used to be a most entertaining person myself, but I get no encouragement now, and the consequence is I have completely subsided. Lady Helen pretends to know nothing about the shocking things that are going on in the country, and I believe she does live with her ears full of cotton wool, but a few little drops of horror must distil through, I think, for something is telling on her temper. Then there is Madge—why my war of wits with the Honourable Madge used to keep the household alive; but now she is so full of mystery, she actually grows silent—does not observe the little shafts I fling at her. As for Sir Archie, I half believe he is concerned with the rebels, so wrapt up in his own thoughts has he become; except, indeed, when his mother is present, and then it is amusing and highly edifying, I am sure, to see the efforts he puts forth to entertain her!"

Miss Janet tossed her head, as if she thought there were other people whom he ought to think it worth his while to entertain.

"Why, Miss Golden," said Hester—"why do you think Sir Archie Munro is concerned with the rebels?"

"Well, I can hardly tell you," said Miss Janet, yawning, "except that he has grown so dull and anxious, and seems to expect dreadful things to happen. If perfectly loyal I don't see what reason he has to be uneasy. He is making his arrangements as if he expected a siege, or something of that sort. He actually took an opportunity to advise me to go home the other day. A most hospitable bridegroom I declare!"

"Bridegroom!" repeated Hester, involuntarily, and then checked herself, shocked at her own thoughtlessness, for Miss Golden had been looking in the fire, and perhaps had forgotten her presence.

"Oh yes, to be sure, bridegroom!" said Janet, looking round, no way displeased nor abashed. "I thought every one knew about that pretty well. It is an old engagement, and promises to be older before it is brought to a conclusion. If Lady Helen could get her way it might be finished off to-morrow. But she can't get her way!" said Miss Janet, with a little grimace of defiant satisfaction. "No, we are nice quiet easy-going people here, and we don't like to be hurried. We like to take our time. We are very comfortable as we are."

And Janet embraced her knee, and smiled at the fire, and appeared as cosy as any one could wish to be. Hester looked at the luxurious self-complacent young lady, and thought of Pierce. His ring was still round Hester's neck. That last command of the Mother Augustine had prevented the possibility of its ever being delivered by Hester to its rightful owner, now present. She could not explain her acquaintanceship with Mr. Pierce without discovering her connexion with Lady Humphrey. The intention had long been in her mind to return the ring, in a letter to the young gentleman; but what with letters to the Mother Augustine, and letters to Lady Humphrey, every opportunity for her pen had hitherto been fully taken advantage of. She thought about Pierce, and his pains, and his hopes, and his fears, and she pitied him. And she looked upon Janet, and strongly desired to know the secret of her heart. She did not doubt that Pierce was forgotten, yet she could not make up her mind that Sir Archie was beloved. Janet's manner in speaking of him made her indignant. If he did not deserve something better than this, if the plighting of his troth had not called forth some deeper sentiment than Miss Janet seemed to feel, then the world was turning out a place altogether not worth living in.

"Yes, he actually advised me to go home," said Janet; "planning my journey as coolly as if he were my father sending me to school. He said I ought to lose no time, but I said, 'By your leave, Sir Archie; why?' He said, because there were going to be sadder doings yet in the country, that by-and-by I might want to escape, when travelling might not be so easy. I was not going to be ordered off that way. It did not suit me. So I made him a curtsey, and said, 'By your leave, Sir Archie, I am not a coward; and I intend to stay a little longer.' And so I do. But I went to Lady Helen, and told her Sir Archie was turning me out of doors. I said I should go. She sobbed into her handkerchief and declared that she could not part with me. She promised me some pretty gaieties at Christmas. And I consented to remain."

"How will gaieties agree with the sad doings spoken of by Sir Archie?" asked Hester, who had got a little pale.

Janet shrugged her shoulders. "We are not going to make our plans to suit grumblers," she said. "I am dying for a little excitement. We will have all we can get. And I can tell Sir Archie, that I will not be turned back another night all because some ill-conducted soldiers are making a row among the people upon the road. It is dull enough here all the

time without having one's meagre bit of amusement taken away."

And Miss Golden, having delivered herself of these and other kindred sentiments, stood up, sighed, yawned, gave Hester a sudden desperate hug, and went away.

Hester, next morning, felt a great leaping at heart when she folded up Lady Helen's yards of tabinet and velvet, bombazine and paduasoy, laid them aside for an interval of rest, and departed in Mrs. Hazeldean's pony phaeton for the village. This was the friend who had been promised her by the Mother Augustine, with whom she was now going to become more closely acquainted. Hitherto she had only had glimpses of a bright dark face, even the momentary vision of whose strength and sweetness had made her unaccountably glad.

Mrs. Hazeldean's house stood among its trees, somewhat backward, high up at the end of the village street, just where it ascended a hill with some toil; along the sides of which hill the houses lagged and straggled, as if some of them had not had strength or perseverance for the ascent. It had an ample, dark-red, comfortable exterior, with expansive windows well-lined with warm draperies, with a jovial-looking knocker on the hall door, and just enough ivy on the gable and chimneys to soften off the edges of the ruddy walls, and blend the homely pile into the picturesque masses of the greenery around it. In the corners of the mossy lawn, round the boles of the old trees, the scarlet geraniums wove their burning hieroglyphics. Showers of vivid amber, and irregular drifts of rosy brown swept over branches that still kept a remnant of their summer draperies; over the tall trees that looked down upon the chimneys, the lower foliage of that sanctuary of sweets which was half garden, half orchard, away to the backward; and the denser leafiness of the sober grove that wandered away from the gable, behind which the sun had a trick of setting with a particularly fiery glamour of wintry evenings.

Within, this house was a den of wholesome comfort, a very nest for repose. Everything was faultless, regular, in perfect order; yet nothing stiff, nothing monotonous, nor prim. "She hath looked well to the paths of her house, and hath not eaten her bread idle." So said her glittering table, so the choice pictures on her walls; so said her shining rooms, with their subdued glow of colouring and their gratefully tempered light; so the few servants, in their good humour with the world and worship of their mistress. So said the poor; who asked not in vain for the crumbs that fell from her board.

It was not easy to persuade Hester that she had come to this house a great deal more to rest than to do work. But very soon she began to realise that this wonderfully fine gown of Mrs. Hazeldean's, about which there had been some talk, was little but an excuse to bring her there, a peg on which to hang a deed of kindness. True, some dark violet poplin, and some black velvet were suffered to be at her disposal for two or three hours every morning, but after that they were sure to slip through her fingers in an unaccountable manner, sometimes by one accident, sometimes by another. And the reading of choice books, pleasant chat, invigorating rambles through the frosty glens, refreshing visits to the friendly poor in the cottages, together with delicious spells of mere dreamy idleness, filled up the remainder of the measure of the days; till Hester began to wonder if she were still indeed Hester; not rather some other person who had been born under a lucky star, to be loved, and petted, and indulged by Mrs. Hazeldean. Till Lady Helen, from her castle, began to send messages: to which Mrs. Hazeldean always replied that the work Hester had been sent to her to do was still far from being finished. And till Lady Helen began to grumble.

"I knew how it would be," she said. "I knew that dear Margaret would discover the girl's talent, and set about replenishing her whole wardrobe. Not that I grudge her the opportunity I am sure, nor yet that I think it is not needed. But Christmas is drawing near, and there is such a great deal to be done!"

Sir Archie Munro had always been in the habit of paying frequent visits to his aunt. She shared all his sympathies, she was in all his secret counsels. This was but natural, since it was true that there was not a person with an anxiety, or a trouble, who ever came near Mrs. Hazeldean without instinctively turning to her for something, he knew not what, of assistance, courage, or assuagement, which he felt blindly but unerringly sure she had to give. Thus there was not a matter requiring judgment, especially fine and strong, which Mrs. Hazeldean was not called upon, somehow, to judge; not a difficulty which other people gave up in despair which was not brought to Mrs. Hazeldean to be solved. Above all, there was not a sorrow more than usually burthensome to her neighbour, of which she did not lighten the load by taking a share upon her shoulders. But then nobody knew this except the doctor and his wife; unless the people out of doors took to telling their own secrets, and to whispering her holy fame at their firesides, among their prayers.

So Sir Archie was in the habit of coming to talk over the affairs of the country with his aunt, and he did not think it necessary to discontinue his visits, because it so happened that Hester was in the house. And so pleasant was it round that fireside of an evening when the miseries of the country were laid aside for a while, so terribly interesting when they were not, that Hester began to slip naturally into her place in the family group, to forget for the time that she was a dressmaker, and to almost lose her awe of that grand goodly gentleman, Sir Archie Munro. The only thing that surprised and disappointed her in him a little was his anxiety about Mrs. Hazeldean's new dress.

She was so tired of this among the women at the castle, that it was rather a dismay to her to hear Sir Archie on the subject.

"Is this the new gown, Aunt Margaret?" he would ask, touching her sleeve. "I do assure you I am very anxious to see you in that dress."

And then he would look from Mrs. Hazeldean to Hester, and from Hester to Mrs. Hazeldean, till Hester would shrink back into her chair and feel intolerably guilty, being so conscious as she was of her strange idleness. But Mrs. Hazeldean would say, smiling,

"Patience, patience! I am in no hurry with that gown, Archie."

And there were times as well when Sir Archie happened in after he had seen his aunt's cloak fluttering alone upon the road, and gave Hester still further lessons in making friends with him. I have not time now to set down the conversations which passed between them, but they were quaint enough and simple enough to put to shame the would-be wiser gossip of many people who would have liked to hear them. There was not a compliment in the whole of them, and yet, having assured Mrs. Hazeldean that he would not disturb Hester, Sir Archie was hardly so careful as he might have been. Hester's simplicity began to wonder. She began to tremble when she saw Sir Archie coming down the avenue alone, and to wish that Mrs. Hazeldean would not go out without her. I do not know how it was that he betrayed himself so far one day as to send Hester, after his departure, flying up the stairs on the tip-toe of terror lest the very walls should hear her heart beating with delight, sadly wrong, but also with honest fear and remorse. What way was this that the sun had begun to shine, catching up all the colours of the world, and weaving them together with its rays in an inextricable confusion of enchantment? Oh, Miss Janet Golden, what would you think of this? Oh, Sir Archie, the splendid and the great, why could you not remain the hero you used to be? Sat down Hester and wept. But the next day she arose up in amazement at her silly mistake. And she set to work to extol every one except herself. And this strange blunder which she had fallen into was not to be cleared up in her own mind, without leaving some traces which might endure many a day. It was a great pity she had been born such a fool, Hester thought. But having set herself somewhat to rights, she acknowledged that she had received a proper check for her forgetfulness of matters most important. And she tasked herself to improve her present opportunity of learning the political feelings of Sir Archie Munro. And she wrote many piteous letters on this subject to Lady Humphrey.

Mrs. Hazeldean was so persistently ingenious in delaying Hester's operations on her dress that it required a very startling threat to bring her to her senses. Lady Helen and Miss Madge volunteered a sisterly excursion to her dwelling to inspect the many improvements which must have been made in dear Margaret's wardrobe by this time.

This proposal had its effect, and Hester was packed up and returned to her employers. And a few days afterwards Mrs. Hazeldean came to dine at the castle.

"How do you like my new dress?" whispered she to her nephew, as she took her seat by his side at the dinner-table. And she slightly held up as she spoke a silken purple fold of her right royal-looking robe.

Sir Archie flashed a bright look into her smiling face, and helped her to turkey. This was no time for sentiment. But it was remarked by Lady Helen, when the ladies reached the drawing-room, that dear Archie had been more like himself during dinner-time to-day than ever she had seen him since these hideous doings had begun in the country.

"And she sewed all this, did she?" he said, having found his way to Mrs. Hazeldean's side immediately on his reappearance in the drawing-room. "Every stitch of it?" he asked, examining the long-expected gown. "And what verdict have you brought me wrapped up in the folds of this handsome skirt?"

"Here is my answer," said Mrs. Hazeldean, as the door opened and Hester appeared, led by the Honourable Madge, who had seconded, quite rapturously, dear Margaret's request that the young inmate of the tower-room should be invited to the drawing-room; this being only a family party, no high-born guests present to be shocked. And Hester, in her trepidation at such condescension, had quite forgotten her resolution announced to Madge, of confining herself to the use of threadbare garments for the remainder of her life, and had recognised the expedience of clothing herself in the pretty grey silk, and long coral ear-rings, which had so nearly brought her into trouble with the Mother Augustine. And in these, and with her hair packed round her head like so much twisted bullion, and with her face as fresh and fair as it could be, it were quite hopeless to find a sweeter-looking young thing than our Hester looked on the occasion.

CHAPTER XIX. MISS MADGE'S REBEL.

Lady Helen Munro might live with her ears full of cotton wool, and Miss Janet Golden might toss her head at having her horses turned on the road when going out for an evening's amusement; but there were fierce doings making a hot progress through the country, the perpetrators of which were but little concerned for the convenience of fair ladies.

Dire tidings did the daily post now bring to the peaceful fishing village, that had sat, gratefully, for so many hundred years, in the lap of its fertile glens, at the feet of its bountiful bay. A hostile soldiery, utterly unchecked in their terrible license, scoured the land. The flower of the population was melting off the mountain-sides; dales and hamlets were giving up their strength and pride to the prison, the torture, and the gibbet. Even already in our glens the

wail of desolation had arisen among the cottages. Sir Archie Munro, in anguish for his people, strove in vain to shield them from the horrors of the times. Day by day one disappeared and another disappeared from among the hearty glensmen. Frantic tales of distress came flying to the castle. The servants clenched their hands and cursed over their work. Miss Madge sat up in her solitude and wept herself nearly blind. Lady Helen went into hysterics at every fresh piece of news. Miss Golden blanched and was silent for a while, but refused to believe one half the stories. And Hester sat up in her tower with her needle trembling in her fingers; for the stitching and ornamenting, the embroidering and flouncing, had all to go on the same, just as if a rain of blood had not begun to fall over the land.

Miss Golden began to think that it had been better she had taken Sir Archie's advice and returned to England; but she was, as she had said, not a coward, and she made up her mind, bravely enough, to see the worst to its end. Lady Helen lamented sorely that she should have been the means of bringing her darling Janet to so miserable a country. Yet, in the same breath, her ladyship quarrelled with her son, because he proposed for the women of the household a prudent retreat to England or France till such time as these miseries should be over. No, why should they go flying over the world, to hide themselves, as if they were a set of rebels? She believed that Archie made the most of things. They could not get so bad as he seemed to expect. She would not set off on a journey in such times, to be dragged out of her coach and shot. She would just lie by on the cosiest couch in her drawing-room, with the most interesting novel she could lay hands upon; and let no one come telling her frightful stories till this panic should have subsided, and the world have come to its senses!

One day a terrible cry arose throughout the glens, rolled along the valley, rang through the mountains. The name of a man, a rebel, hunted by the soldiers, was shouted from rock to rock, till the very echoes bandied it about with shuddering shrieks—was muttered in prayers by tongues that quivered and clove to the mouth with terror. This man was the joy and pride of his friends, foremost among the favourites of the lowly glenspeople. They hunted him in the morning, and they hunted him in the evening, and days went past, and even his own kinsfolk had no clue to his hiding-place. And a month went past. A stray goat had given him milk, and the heath had given him its berries; but these resources having failed, he was at last driven by starvation from his lair. Pallid, shivering, his clothing saturated with the damps of the dripping cavern in which he had lain, tottering upon his feet with the weakness of hunger, fearing to meet the form of a man lest an enemy should make him his prey, or to draw near a dwelling lest destruction should come with him over the threshold of a fellow-creature; sick and desolate, he found himself driven by the very scourge of approaching death to creep down a little lower on the mountain side, were it even to warm his shivering limbs by the sides of the wandering kine, or to crave a handful of meal out of a roving beggar's wallet.

No such comfort for the hunted rebel. The soldiers espied his meagre stooping form, creeping along under the shelter of the whin-bushes and heathery knolls. It would have been difficult for eyes less practised in man-hunting to recognise the stalwart youth who had flown to the hills from the bayonet, in the bent shuddering creature who sought shelter from the bonnie braes that had carried his feet with pride. But these soldiers were right skilful at their work.

The game was scented; the cry was up. Oh, that a jovial ruddy sun should ever look down and smile upon such a piteous scene! A brave son of the mountains, hunted like a fox to the death among those mountains, the pure love of mother-land being his crime. But then Lady Helen said he was very much to blame. He had been right well off in his cottage in the glens. Why need he take to troubling himself about the misery of his country? And certainly it was most inconsiderate of him to throw her ladyship into hysterics on her sofa.

The chase lasted long, for the rebel knew the secrets of his hills. But bloodhounds will not be balked when they have once scented blood, neither would our brave soldiers miss their prey. Yet, notwithstanding, when it was late in the afternoon this rebel, having been started some seven times since morning, gave them the slip, and was lost sight of in the neighbourhood of the castle.

The cook had just sent up an afternoon cup of tea to the several bedrooms of the ladies. The red setting sun was warming up the comfortable haunts of the kitchen, pantries, housekeeper's room, and the various closets and passages of the servants' quarters. Several of the servants were gathered together in a passage discussing in whispers the latest news of the rebel hunt. Pretty Polly, Lady Helen's maid, was pale and red-eyed, struggling to put in her word between recurring agonies of tears. But then the rebel in question was her lover. When last she had seen him he had been handsome and stout, bringing her a bunch of gay ribbons from the fair. Now he was a shadow, a spectre of starvation, with a price upon his head, and bayonets lying in wait for him at every point from which the blessed wind could blow. Good God! who was this, here amongst them?

Pat the butler had opened a back door of the premises, leading into a thick grove, into which evening shadows were already creeping. A flying phantom, somewhat like a galvanised skeleton, had leaped past him through the doorway, clasped its hands in his face, and sped on further into the castle.

Poor Polly sank in a little pale heap in her corner, and was a trouble to no one till such time as people had leisure to look to her,

unasked. It was the best thing she could have done in the interests of her lover, for had she been conscious of what followed, her shrieks or her moans might have betrayed him. The other servants fell back on each side as our rebel dashed amongst them. No one spoke, but they signed to him to pass up the stairs. And up the stairs he fled.

"To the tower!" some one whispered. What tower, and where? Poor rebel dashed blindly onward, upward, beat the doors right and left with his feeble hands, burst over Miss Madge's threshold in the end, and precipitated himself into the middle of her floor; stood in her very presence, quivering, suppliant.

The Honourable Madge was at her afternoon cup of tea. A cup of tea was a thing that had always comforted her greatly, and was the only medicine she found soothing during the sorrows of these times. She was seated on a settee in the corner of her room, with a table drawn up before her; a table on which were placed a tray, an ancient silver tea-pot, some thin bread and butter in a dish, some sweet winter apples and a tea-cup with its saucer. And Miss Madge's feet were on a footstool. Nothing could be more comfortable and placid than the appearance which she presented amongst these kindly-looking arrangements.

The settee on which Miss Madge was sitting was long and low, and was placed in a corner with its back to the wall. It was covered very amply with chintz of a large pattern, Chinese pagodas on an amber ground, mandarins seated apparently upon tea-chests, presenting roses to languishing ladies with curled-up toes and very arched eyebrows. And the settee was draped down to the ground with a garniture of that flouncing well known to be so dear to the Honourable Madge's heart.

Now if the Honourable Madge were mad, as had sometimes been whispered, most certain it is that she kept her madness for the amusement of her friends. On such an emergency as this she was found to be exceedingly sane.

"My friend! my friend!" cried Miss Madge, clapping her mittens, and upsetting her tea-cup into the lap of her yellow silk dress. But that was nothing even to Miss Madge, at such a moment. She whirled up the flounce of her settee with prompt hands.

"Get under!" she cried, in a frantic whisper. "Crawl! Get in and lie close. In, in!" And she pushed him in and packed him away till there was not a vestige of him to be seen. "Now, God's mercy be with you, and keep as still as if you were dead!"

"And it may be that mocking will be catching," muttered Madge to herself, as she cleared up the signs of her own confusion, "for I think Death would have little to do but close your eyes!"

Down on her knees she went, drying up the spilt tea. She arranged her little tray, she drew her table nearer to her couch. She spread out her silken skirts, and picked up a novel, which she placed open in her lap to hide the tea-stains. She was sipping her tea with her eyes upon her book, when the door was a second time thrown open, and a gentleman, an officer in the King's service, appeared.

I say a gentleman, for this officer had been bred to some of the habits of a gentleman, though he had a taste for rebel blood. And he was a little taken aback when he saw a simple-looking lady with astonished eyes raised at his intrusion, with her innocent cup of tea dropping sideways in amazement from its mincing hold in her genteelly arranged fingers, and with her fashionable novel on her knees.

"I beg pardon," he began, "you are surprised—the fact is——"

"Oh, pray, don't apologise!" said the Honourable Madge, making violently graceful efforts to overcome a ladylike surprise and bashfulness, very creditable to any spinster on such an occasion. "It is I who should apologise for my stupidity. You have the advantage of me truly, though I have no doubt you are quite familiar to me if my memory were not so bad. To what do I owe the pleasure of such a charmingly unceremonious visit? Pray have a cup of tea, I always do of an afternoon. So refreshing! A cup of tea with such a book as this delightful Evelina in one's hand, I call it a luxury, nothing less. And really, ha, ha! do you know I get so ridiculously absorbed in a story, ha, ha! I actually thought when I looked up that you were the hero, walking into the room."

And she reached down an ornamental cup and saucer of precious china, which was sitting most conveniently on a bracket above her head, poured some fragrant tea from her little silver pot, enriched it delightfully with thick cream and glistening sugar, and presented it with her sweetest smile to her gallant guest, as she was pleased to call him.

Now this soldier had heard tell that Miss Madge was a little "cracked." She was not a lovely woman, and her sweetness and her winningness were not much after his taste. However, her cup of tea was tempting, and the soldier was fatigued. He drank and he apologised.

"The fact is, madam," he said, "we have been searching for a rebel, supposed to have taken refuge in the castle."

Miss Madge gave a piercing little scream, and her cup fell with a crash upon the tray.

"Ah, ah!" she shrieked, "they will be the death of me, those rebels! Oh, sir, be so good as not to go till you tell me. A rebel in the castle! Ah, my sad fate, a rebel! Promise me that you will search, or I shall not sleep a wink. Not a wink for a month!"

And the Honourable Madge's eyes began to roll, and her nostrils to quiver, and she began to flutter up and down in her seat. She had observed these ominous workings in Lady Helen on sundry occasions, and a hint was never lost upon Miss Madge. The officer made her rapid protestations as to his activity, and terrified at the prospect of approaching hys-

terics, rang the bell violently, bowed, and retired.

But Polly mounted guard over her lover that evening, in a very retired corner of the castle. And he was nursed and fattened unknown to master or mistress; unknown to any but the servants, Hester, and Miss Madge. And when he was able to go forth, he went in search of better fortune.

THE ITALIAN LAUREATE'S LAST POEM.

After Manzoni, who, however, can hardly be said to belong to the present generation, Giovanni Prati, author of Armando, takes the first place among the living poets of Italy. His being made poet-laureate over the head of a superior bard is an accident, of which no one—not even Manzoni—has a right to complain. Prati came in with the house of Savoy. He has been the king's "poet royal" for twenty years. We have only to read his Ode on the Marriage of Prince Humbert, to be convinced that eagles, even when they are born among the mountains of Tyrol, as Prati was, can learn the cackle of the farm-yard. It is true that eagles of this sort have to be tamed by kings.

But Prati is something more than a poet-laureate—he is a poet. Witness Armando, his new work, as fresh and brilliant as Edmenegarda, his boyish production; as vigorous and thoughful as his ballads and lyrics. Witness, too, the esteem in which he is held by his countrymen.

Armando is a sort of life-drama—a poem and a play combined, with songs and ballads interspersed. It is a book for ladies and gentlemen, but it is also a book for men of letters. The extravagance of the nightmare scene, where the Devil, alias Mastragabito, is crucified, is rather far fetched but it is, perhaps, warranted by the subject. We object to Prati's saying (as he does in the preface) that he fears his work is too original, and that he hoped, but hoped in vain, that "some great master, ancient or modern," would have come to his assistance. Modesty of this sort provokes inquiry, and inquiry shows that he has been indebted to Manfred for suggestion of his spectre scenes, while Hamlet has suggested one at least of his soliloquies.

The story of Armando is rather complicated, but it is worth telling. Armando is an Italian of high birth and great fortune, who has become sceptical and cynical from too much learning and goodness of heart—a dreamer who is half a madman and half a poet, but who might have remained a very sensible person if he had not fallen in love. He is described as a libertine in the decline of his youth—a "pale and weary shadow," wandering about the world in search of happiness and finding it not. He is rather tall, with brown hair streaked with grey, and dark piercing eyes, which now and then reveal the "abysses of his soul." He is slovenly in his attire, but always gentlemanly, like one who values himself, but despises the world's opinion, and his smile (for he smiles sometimes) is withering and convulsive. After about three hundred lines of blank verse devoted to a vague summary of his early life, and a long address to the Muse, without which no Italian poem is complete, we find Armando wandering about the Apennines during a storm:

> The forest trees, tormented by the wind,
> Throw up their hundred hands and shriek aloud.
>
> * * * *
>
> The waters leap like tigers from the rocks,

and Armando gets wet. He approaches a hut, and is about to enter, when a shepherd rushes out and asks him to be quiet, as his children—Nello and Rosetta—are asleep. It turns out that they are dead. "The tempest will awake them," says Armando. "I think not so," replies the shepherd. The usual comparisons are made between Death and Sleep, and the traveller is admitted to a view of the children. Two or three days after this, Armando meets a gipsy girl called Pachita, and has his fortune told. Her song is one of the gems of the book, and ought to be set to music. He visits the battle-fields of San Martino and Montebello, meets a soldier with a wooden leg and the Cross of St. Helena—a veteran of "Vaterlò"—who sings a song and disappears, kissing his ribbon. Armando himself never sings, but he is the cause of song in others—and indeed his life and adventures would be nothing without the songs. He goes south and loses his way in a Calabrian valley, where he meets a wolf, but no wolf-hunter, which is a pity: a Wolf Hunter's Song would have been acceptable. He gazes on the setting sun. "Take the salute of an Immortal!" he exclaims, raising his hat to it. He visits a seaport town, where a number of fishermen are amusing themselves at the expense of a poor idiot, who has lost his wits in consequence of the oppression of the Bourbons. The fool's song is as witty as fools' songs (in print) usually are, and the ensuing conversation is so "wisely absurd" that we are afraid it was intended for a bit of metaphysics. Armando gets into a boat and hears a boatman's song, which is fresh and bright, sailor-like, and full of tenderness and love, with the splash of the waves in it. His subsequent adventures are rather numerous. He visits a churchyard and makes the acquaintance of a grave-digger (who sings a song); he enters a wayside inn, where a drunken man, called Joshua, the butt of his companions, is tampering with a clock, saying that he is the Joshua of the Bible and is going to make the sun stand still; he strolls into the forest and meets a brigand, who is talkative but songless; and on his way to some obscure hut, his resting place for the night, he overhears a fine song in praise of poverty sung by a labouring man on his way home. In the middle of the night he is awakened by the

sound of a lute and wild ecstatic cries. It is Pachita "singing herself to death" outside the hut. Her death has such an effect on Armando, whose madness is growing upon him, that he at once leaves the neighbourhood; and soon afterwards the story and the author have a bout of singing on their own account, under the head of Lyrics, including Jupiter, or the Voice of the Air; Saturn (the Earth); Vulcan (Fire); Neptune (Water); Androgeus (the Voice of the Spirit); and Pan (All Things). We cannot say we think much of these specimens, but perhaps they are intended to show what Armando could do if he lost his head. When he reappears on the scene he is in Rome, and about to pay a visit to his old friend Pagolo the sculptor. In a long and wearisome soliloquy he mentions (for the first time) the name of Clara—that "fiend in angel's mould" who has blighted his existence. He becomes a suitor for the hand of Arbella, the sculptor's daughter, and half forgets "extinct Clara;" a dreadful state of things when we remember that he has a rendezvous with her ghost, in the later part of the story. He falls asleep in Pagolo's studio and dreams he is on Olympus. The statues of the gods and goddesses sing, or when they cannot sing, oblige the company with a recitation. "Achilles," "Psyche," and "Prometheus" are the best of their middling performances.

Up to this point the reader has had very little insight into the madness of Armando. The reason is that Armando has hitherto shunned the society of ladies. His brain is oppressed by ladies. They remind him of Clara's perfidy. The fairer they are the more likely they are to be false, and when he is most in love with Arbella he is most suspicious of her good qualities. In fact he secretly suspects her of being a "flirt," and something worse, and it is only when she talks to him and thrills him with a glance of her beautiful eyes, that he is persuaded of her innocence and wishes to prove his good opinion of her by committing suicide. There is a garden scene in the second part of the poem which is worthy of the hand of Fouqué. The Voice of the Rose, is charming; so is The Butterfly Song. But Arbella has discovered that her lover has a secret. It appears that Armando has been delirious between the first and second parts of the story, and has called his kind nurse (Arbella) the most awful names: "Clara," "damnable Clara," "fiendish Clara," &c., which she didn't like.

We now come to the last part but one of the book, the part which details, at great length, the delirium or madness of Armando. It seems like one protracted nightmare. The "Eumenides" and a number of artizans sing songs on alternate pages. Mastragabito (a "spiritualist" who obtains money and palaces by a kind of fraud not recognised in the police-courts) figures as the Devil, and makes, love with great success, to Arbella. The reader here should have been forwarned that Armando is crazy, and that it is Armando and not the author of the book who is speaking. It must naturally bother a gentleman (sensible on all other points) to believe that he and the Devil are making love to the same young lady, and that the Devil is getting the best of it! Signor Prati says,

> From a variety of causes inherent in the human soul and having an existence in the outer world, certain natures, even strong ones, fall at certain times, and in the midst of certain conditions of society into a state of sloth, spleen, and dreaminess, which assumes the character of a malady; and if to this malady is coupled the remembrance of a lost illusion or a tendency to dream and give way to gloomy thoughts, the consequences may be very deplorable and even lead to frightful catastrophes.

This is the text on which Prati has written his book. He thinks his countrymen require a little talking to, and that the strength and vigour of the upper classes of Italian society are being sapped by moral cowardice, and the dolce far niente for which as a nation they are so remarkable. He thinks they ought to work more than they do, and tells them how to get well when they are suffering from spleen. "Work," says Signor Prati; "make a statue, or a book. Be a tailor, a blacksmith. Do something; you will have no time to be miserable." This is the spirit of his teaching, and Armando is the type of the man who would be all the better for hard-handed toil; his hands being soft, so is his head. The scenes in which he fancies he sees that the devil is destroying his happiness, under the name of Mastragabito, alias a Spanish traveller, alias a German Prince, alias Cardenius the sculptor, occupy nearly two hundred pages, that is to say a third part of the book. They lead on to a startling climax. The author can summon goblins into his presence, but he does not know what to do with them when they arrive. He goes too far. The result is a jumble of loftiness and absurdity which it would be difficult to match in literature. Some of the ghostly business is so badly done that it provokes laughter instead of awe. The fiends go off in blue lights; the fairies strut and stagger about the stage as if their wires were broken; and the showman (i.e. the author) destroys all perspective by allowing his hands to be seen among the puppets. Mastragabito himself is put away in his box long before the play is over, and the reader is left face to face with the real characters of the story (Pagolo, Arbella, and Armando) in a very unsatisfactory manner. Perhaps the most successful part of the entre-acte is the crucifixion of the devil. This nimble Mastragabito, this Italian Mephistopheles seeks an interview with Madreden (the Sphynx), and asks her how long he (the devil) may torment mankind. He pleads for another thousand years of life, but is sentenced to death. He is conducted to the place of execution, where thieves, murderers, and liars; the spirits of pestilence and war — hunger, fire, and misery, pass before him in grim procession. To attempt this and to succeed in it is to

produce something altogether new and startling. The remarks of Mastragabito are sometimes so horrible and so impious that it is impossible to print them in English, and now and then the phantoms speak in such a ghastly and impressive manner that the blood is chilled, and the extravagance of the scene is for a moment or two lost sight of. When the devil rises from the dead it is in the quality of a conjuror; that is to say, the conjuror having ceased to play the part of the devil (in Armando's distempered fancy) reappears in his own shape, and foretells the dreamer's death. The story winds up with a bridal scene, which is changed into a scene of mourning by the announcement that Armando is dead. He has drowned himself in the Adriatic by mistake, or in a sort of wishy-washy fulfilment of the prophecy which forewarned him to avoid water, and his body is washed up on his wedding day.

The book is full of great beauties and glaring defects. The nightmare scene, which occupies so much space, has nothing whatever to do with the story, and the devil, so far from bringing about a crisis, never appears on the scene at all, except in the morbid imagination of a sick man. Last not least, the author—and not the critic—is to blame for any absurdities or mystifications which may exist in this résumé. If he wants his critics to understand his story throughout, perhaps he will be good enough to write a key to it. Perhaps he will say (as Coleridge said of Christabell) that he does not understand it himself. But we must be lenient with Armando. As an epic it is a failure, but as a story in verse introducing some of the most charming lyrics which have been produced in Italy of late years, it is a great success. This is a part of the Boatman's Song, in almost a literal translation:

I.

My lady has such lovely eyes,
She is the altar of my vows,
She seems a Saint of Paradise,
But she shall be my tender spouse;
The rose is not so red as she,
The lily's not so white as she;
Around her head the beams are spread
Which light the world when day is dead!
And night and day the boatman brave and strong
Singeth his song.

II.

One day a stranger kissed her hand
And heaved a sigh, but all in vain;
The girl was true to love's command,
And would not smile upon his pain.
Said she: "My lover's poor and low,
His house is not the best I know;
But when he stands upon the sands
He seems the lord of all the lands!"
And night and day the boatman brave and strong
Singeth his song.

III.

Her name is like a charm to me,
Her voice is like a silver bell;
When I'm alone upon the sea
I think of her and all is well.
Her virtue keeps my boat secure,
Her name has made me proud and pure;
In storm and shine her fame is mine,
And God will guard the foaming brine!
And night and day the boatman brave and strong
Singeth his song.

FAR-WESTERN GAMBLERS.

In Far-Western "society" it is no longer reputable to be known as a professional gambler, yet men who remember the days when everybody played will be apt to look lightly upon the vice. It is not uncommon, therefore, to see merchants (especially American) having a social game of "cut-throat monte," "eucre," or "poker," with piles of gold before them. In the mountain towns it is still worse, and the ante-rooms of the Nevada and California legislators used to be a perfect carnival of gambling in the evenings, and even during the day, when they were not intent on gambling in the public weal. The tolerance of gambling and the wide-spread habit of betting show through many of the slang phrases in general use on the coast. Continually you will hear men, and even women and children sometimes, adding, after making some positive assertion, "You bet," or "You bet yer life," or "You bet yer bones," while to "bet yer boots" is confirmation strong as holy writ—in the mines, at least. A miner is always particular about his "butes," their form and durability, and they are a common subject of conversation in the places where diggers most do congregate. Again, nobody in the North-West will have any hesitation in telling you that such and such a statement is "played out" when he means to convey an imputation that you are somewhat beside the truth, or that the proposals you may be making to him are not suitable to his ideas of things right and fitting. If he further informs you that "this has been played out since '49," he means that since the first colonisation of the Pacific coast by "smart men," such a thing was never believed in: 1849 being the year of the commencement of the Californian gold digging. A vote being taken on an important measure in the Indiana senate, a grave and reverend senator, who had not been attending to the "biz" in hand, did not know what the question was when his name was called by the secretary. He looked puzzled for a moment, and then rapping the desk with his knuckles after the manner of card-players, said, "I pass!" An audible titter ran through the hall, and the president of the senate "took it up."

A divine in a Far-Western State visited a distant town for the purpose of preaching the dedicatory sermon in a new church. Court was in session, and on Saturday the judge and lawyers congregated together in a room, and amused themselves by card-playing and story-telling. The divine, at the request of a lawyer, visited the room. He came into the room so suddenly that they were unable to hide their cards and

whisky. The divine looked on awhile, and then politely invited the gentlemen present to attend church next day and hear him preach. This they agreed to do, and Sunday found them, judge and lawyers, seated in the "amen corner." The sermon over, the minister announced: "Friends, the citizens of this town have built a fine church. There is still fifteen hundred dollars due. We propose to raise the money by subscription to-day, and" (eyeing the judge) "I go one hundred" (imitating the style of the gamblers of last night). The judge, glancing at the lawyers, slowly responded, "I see your hundred." "Thank you, brother," said the divine, "will any one raise it?" looking at the same time at attorney number one. The lawyer saw he was in for it, and quietly replied, "I go a hundred blind," and so on through the list. The divine raked down both the bar and their money, until the scene closed by a sharp, shrill voice announcing, "I see the last hundred, and call you." The astonishment of the congregation can be imagined. I venture, however, to think that these lawyers will not soon invite the divine to witness another social game of eucre, when men "see" each other, "go it blind," and "call" the hand.

I can vouch myself for the exact truth of that story; the next I tell from hearsay, and don't answer for, but as I have seen something very like it, I believe it may be true.

At a Far-Western court, the case of Smith *v.* Jones was called up.

"Who's for the plaintiff?" inquired the judge, impatiently.

"May it please the court," said a rising member of the legal fraternity, "Pilkins is for the plaintiff, but I left him just now over in the tavern playing a game of poker. He's got a sucker there, and he is sure to skin him, right smart, if he has only time. He's got everything all set to ring a 'cold deck,' in which case he'll deal for himself four aces and his opponent four queens, so that your honour will perceive that he must 'rake the persimmons.'"*

"Dear me!" said the judge, with a sigh; "that's too bad! It happens at a very unfortunate time! I am very anxious to get on with this case."

A brown study followed, and at length a happy idea struck the judge:

"Bill," said he, addressing the friend of the absent Pilkins who had just spoken, "you understand poker about as well as Pilkins. Suppose you go over and play his hand!"

And Bill did it.

We have another phase of the gambling spirit in the extraordinary bets which are now and again recorded in the papers. An old Jew miser in San Francisco, being irritated on one occasion by jests at his love of money, proposed that the man who was baiting him should go with him in a boat into the middle of the bay, where, for every twenty-dollar gold piece the Jew should toss overboard, the other should toss over five dollars, and let them see who would be first to cry "Hold." Both being excessively purse proud, the bet was accepted, and the scene was witnessed by hundreds. The Jew's opponent was the first to save his dollars.

The "Gridley sack of flour," which became glorious about the time of the American Sanitary Commission for the benefit of the wounded soldiers in the army, was the effect of a bet, and the story of its sale and re-sale is thoroughly illustrative of this wild extravagance. There were two candidates for the mayoralty of the village of Austin, in Nevada—a "city" in the wildest part of the desert, and not then two years old, but with five thousand inhabitants. Each candidate had agreed, if defeated, to carry a sack of flour on his back from Austin to a neighbouring village in broad day. Accordingly, when Mr. R. G. Gridley lost his election, he prepared to fulfil his engagement. Headed by a band of music in a waggon, leading his little boy, clad in the national uniform, by the hand, and with the sack of flour on his back, followed by a mongrel procession of miners and citizens, Mr. Gridley took up his foot journey to the appointed place. Arrived there, the thought struck him that the gay spirits and patriotic feelings of the crowd, which grew as he travelled, might be turned to humane account. He instantly proposed now to sell the sack of flour, for the benefit of the sick and wounded in the army, to the highest bidder. The humour took. The sack was sold and sold again, netting five thousand dollars. The amount realised fired the ingenious Gridley with a resolve to make the most of his lucky idea. Accordingly he started for a journey of three hundred miles to Virginia city, with the sack of flour in company. Arriving on a Sunday, and finding a Sanitary Commission meeting going on in the theatre, he proceeded to the place, got admitted to the stage, and there, telling his story to the audience, sold the sack to the audience for five hundred and eighty dollars. The next morning, having procured a band of music, he proceeded to make a tour of the neighbouring towns, Gold Hill, Silver City, and Dayton, selling the sack wherever he could find bidders, and adding the price labelled on the face of this more than Fortunatus purse. At Gold Hill the sack sold for five thousand eight hundred and twenty-two dollars fifty cents; at Silver City, for eight hundred and thirty dollars; at Dayton, for eight hundred and seventy-three dollars. Finally, returning to Virginia city again, the sack, putting forward all its attractions, won a prodigious subscription of twelve thousand and twenty-five dollars. Mr. Gridley, pursuing his successful way, arrived at Sacramento just as a "Sanitary Commission pic-nic" was in progress. In the midst of the festivities he marched into the crowd, a band of music leading the way, a stalwart negro walking by his side carrying the sack, and an extempore procession following

* A Southern fruit, but here of course applied to money. An expressive Western phrase is, "the longest pole (poll) will knock down the persimmons"—i.e. the longest head will win.

him, which grew larger every moment, and presented himself for new conquests to the officers of the day and the president of the commission. Notwithstanding the stimulus of patriotism and champagne, the sack did not fare so well here as before. But here several supplementary wrinkles of humour were suggested by the sack. Among others, a good woman, finding a small island of a few rods square in the swamp, had erected a bridge of one plank, and established such a rate of toll that, to see nothing there, cost the curiosity of some hundreds a half-dollar each. Then the president of the commission was invited to shake hands with some hundreds of the company, who bought the privilege at from fifty cents to a double eagle (ten dollars) a piece, making his hat his *till*, until it was literally half-full of silver and gold. Carried thence to Sacramento, the sack was sold again at a public lecture by the Rev. Dr. Bellows, for several hundred dollars and finally transported to San Francisco; it added moderate gains to its enormous harvest even in that comparatively staid community. Six months later the sack, with its irrepressible owner, arrived in New York, en route for the great fair at St. Louis. He did not stop here, and I believe the sum realised by the subscription given in this odd way to the Sanitary Fund, was not much short of forty thousand dollars, or eight thousand pounds.

Closely allied to the spirit of gambling is the reckless and mercurial temperament of the Western man. When Sacramento was being destroyed by fire, and many a man saw his whole worldly substance going to ruin, some of the merchants managed to save some champagne, and, going outside the town, drank "Better luck next time. This is a great country." Next day a tavern-keeper had a space cleared among the ruins, and over a little board shanty hastily run up was this inscription: "LAFAYETTE HOUSE. Drinks two bits. Who cares a darn for a fire!"

What energy these people have! I know a carpenter who arrived in a village one morning with his wife and child and chest of tools, but having no "lumber" (wood), he pawned most of the tools to buy some. He then obtained the privilege of building on a vacant lot, and commenced at three o'clock in the afternoon. At five o'clock the house was enclosed. At sunset his family moved into the house; and in less than an hour afterwards the good wife had supper ready. The family slept in the house that night.

Men who can work like that, believe in work, and have no fear of "busting up." A young English nobleman, heir of one of the richest peers in England, while waiting at a remote country station one day, entered into conversation with one of the neighbouring settlers.

"Been in these parts consid'able, stranger?"

"Yes, for some length of time"

"How long have ye bin here?"

"A few weeks."

"What's yer bisuness?"

"I have no business."

"What are you travellin' for, then?"

"Only for my own pleasure."

"Don't yer do any bisuness? How do you get yer livin', then?"

"It isn't necessary for me to work for my support. My father is a man of property, and gives me an allowance sufficient for my wants."

"But s'pose the old man should die?"

"In that case, I dare say he'd leave me enough to live upon."

"*But s'pose he should bust up?*"

Here the conversation ended: his lordship walking away, apparently struck by a new idea.

Travel is safe on most Far-Western roads, where there are no hostile Indians about; yet, partly through old habit, partly as a precaution absolutely necessary in some places, nearly everybody goes armed, and it is wonderful how many pistols will flash out when a street fight arises in any Western town, or even in San Francisco itself. A San Franciscan, who is justly proud of having helped to rear up so polite a town in a comparatively short time, is very jealous on this point. He continually impresses on a stranger that "Nobody, *sir*, carries weapons now-a-days." And he would perhaps convince you of this abstract doctrine, did not one of the chilly forenoon winds blow up Montgomery-street and expose a neat "Colt" at the waistband of his trousers. I saw a man kneeling before me in a certain church in San Francisco, and as his coat-tail divided, the handle of a huge navy revolver showed itself. The knowing men, however, carry "Derringer" pistols in their coat-pockets. "You can always know," a shrewd old miner explained to me, "when a man has a pistol in his pocket, by the way he sits down in a chair. If he plumps down, he's safe; but if he sits down cautiously and looks arter his coat-tails, he's on the shyot—certain!" The same with a knife. Horsemen, when travelling, carry it in the boot, and footmen down the neck; hence a bowie-knife is popularly known as a "Kansas neck-blister."

But as for the Far-Western rowdies, Montana and Idaho territories are at present the only regions in the North Pacific globe where they have anything like full swing for their playfulness. In Idaho region, I heard of a man who came rushing down the one street of a mining village on a Sunday morning. He had been attracted by a noise, and came on shouting, "What's the matter?" Presently his excitement abated: "Oh! only a man shot! Why, I tho'rt it wus a dorg fight!" In that locality they used to ask at breakfast, in a careless, unconcerned way, with their mouths full, "Who was shot last night?" And they generally had "a dead man to breakfast." Nevada has become rather more peaceable since it was elevated to the dignity of a state; but at one time, and in some places yet, if one gentleman "riled" another, it was the correct thing that the gentleman who was vexed at him should ask in a piquant tone whether he was "heeled"—and if he replied, Yes, why then it was eti-

quette to tell him to "turn loose." An official went to a certain nameless state and inquired of one of the leading men for the sight of a copy of the state laws. The leading man was very polite, went to a drawer, and, producing a bowie-knife about a foot and a half in length, most sententiously replied, "Here, sir, is a complete edition of them!"

San Francisco is now a very peaceable town, and no longer would you, when taking an airing in front of your door, be startled by a bullet whizzing past your ear, and a gentleman emerging from the dark to apologise for disturbing you, "having mistaken his man." In the old days a culprit was hung for stealing an ounce of gold, but was only fined heavily for killing a man. A rowdy would take a bet that he would bring down a man on the other side of the street. If the man shot had no friends, and if there were enough hard swearing and bribery, it was almost certain that the murderer would get off with slight punishment. These were the days when Ned M'Gowan was judge—than whom no greater scoundrel was ever expelled San Francisco by the Vigilance Committee.

Still, street fights are not over. Only recently, a man was publicly shot down in San Francisco; but his murderer got off because several witnesses swore that they saw the assassinated man "put his hand behind, as if intending to draw." In the same street—the most fashionable and crowded thoroughfare in San Francisco—there was a fight lately described in this cool matter-of-fact way by a morning paper:

"There was a serious shooting affray in our principal street (Montgomery), which resulted in the death of four persons. It seems, one Bill Davis, a noted gambler, who resides in Yreka, was interested in and drove a horse-race, which came off at Placerville on the 15th inst., and 'throwed' the race, making four thousand five hundred dollars by it. Hank Stevens, Ball, Dutch Abe, and Spanish Bob, four 'sports,' backed Davis's horse, and got broke, swore vengeance, killing at sight, &c. On the 18th they all came to this city except Davis, and publicly said they were going to shoot Davis on sight, &c. On the 21st Davis came in town, and at two P.M. was getting his boots polished in a black's, adjoining the Fashion, when Ball and Dutch Abe came to the door, and looking in, exclaimed, 'Here's the dirty thief now!' and, drawing their revolvers, commenced shooting. Davis jumped out of the chair, with one boot polished, and drawing his revolver, fired, and Ball fell dead across an iron grating. Davis then jumped out on the side-walk, laughingly saying, 'You've made a mistake,' and fired at Dutch Abe, the ball taking effect in his right breast. He fell, when Davis ran and caught the revolver from Ball's hand, saying, as he walked to the door of the Fashion, 'Where's the rest of your murderers now?' Blood was running down Davis's left hand from the arm, and also down the right cheek. As he was on the point of entering the door, he was met by Stevens and Spanish Bob, when Davis raised the revolver and fired twice. Stevens fell, and Spanish Bob jumped over him on to the side-walk and fired. Davis staggered, but recovering, they (Davis and Spanish Bob) commenced in good earnest, each striving to fire a deadly shot. Davis was laughing. Then they commenced firing at each other about twenty feet apart. After Davis had fired two shots, he threw the revolver at Bob, and changing the revolver he took from Ball into his right hand, he raised it, and it snapped three times; the fourth time it went off, and Bob fell (Davis had fallen before this, and was lying with his face on the banquette). Davis threw the revolver into the street (with blasphemies duly reported). He then pulled a Derringer, and both having one shot each, began crawling towards each other on their stomachs. When about five feet apart, they both raised partly up, and fired simultaneously, when Bob's head fell, and he remained perfectly still. Davis then said, crawling towards Bob, 'He's gone; I've cooked *his* goose,' and then partly turned on his side, and tried to rise. On examination, Ball and Spanish Bob were dead, Dutch Abe and Stevens mortally wounded, the first having been shot through the right lung, causing internal hæmorrhage, &c., the latter was shot through the left breast. Spanish Bob had four wounds on him, two in the right breast, on the right arm, and one between the eyes. Ball had a ball in his heart. Davis had six wounds, two in the right leg, one in the right breast, one in the left shoulder, one in the left wrist (through), and one on the right cheek, where a bullet had struck the cheekbone and glanced off, cutting out a piece of flesh of the size of a ten-cent piece. Stevens died on the 24th at forty minutes past ten A.M.; Dutch Abe died yesterday. Doctors say Davis will certainly recover."

It used to be at one time (and is yet in the rougher places), a signal for shooting, if a man refuse to drink with another, whether an acquaintance or not, or whatever his character. Behind the bar of a hotel at Reese River, in 1863, was the following announcement: "All guests in the house to be up by seven o'clock; all in the barn by six o'clock. Every man to sweep out his own sleeping-place. No fighting at the tables. No quartz taken at the bar. Any man violating these rules will be SHOT."

Sociability may, like hostilities, in the Far West, be carried too far. I was once called "an unsociable sort of a beggar" by the landlord of a roadside hostelry in British Columbia, because, after having had a general "lay out" on the floor with four Gentile miners, I objected to the company of a fifth companion in the shape of a Jew pedlar. But the Far-Western instinct recognises that the line must be drawn somewhere. There was once a Western governor named Powell, famous for chewing and spitting, of whom somebody remarked that he was a very sociable man. "Sociable!" replied the

individual addressed, "I rather think he is—darned sociable! I was introdooced to him over to Grayson Springs last fall, and he hadn't been with me ten minutes before he begged all the tobacco I had, got his feet up in my lap, and spat all over me! Darn-*ed* sociable!"

UNDER SENTENCE OF DEATH.

It was three o'clock on a fine warm afternoon in the latter end of April. The garden at the rear of the comfortable, whitewashed, thickly thatched cabin, was abundantly stocked with early cabbage and potatoes; everything bore the look of humble prosperity; from the blue smoke curling up from the freshly made fire on the kitchen hearth, to the green meadows where the cows were lying, peacefully ruminating. A broad river, glistening in the sun's rays, rolled smoothly beside the boundary wall of their pasture.

Yet Kate Moran stood at her father's door looking sadly across the river to the mass of shipping, houses, and spires, which rose on the other side.

"Mother, honey, I can't keep me eyes aff that dhreadful place!" said she, turning as she spoke to an elderly woman who sat knitting on a bench near the fire.

"Musha, acushla, what good'll that do ye?" said she, rising and going over to the door also. "Come in now," putting her hand on her daughter's shoulder caressingly.

"Oh, mother! To think o' the poor fellow bein'——" here she fairly broke down and burst into a wail of distress.

"Whisht now!" cried her mother. "Here's your feither comin', and don't let him see ye cryin.'"

Kate ran hastily into a bedroom, as her father entered the kitchen.

"There's no chance for the poor craythur, Pat?" asked his wife, as a broad-faced, good-humoured-looking man came forward and sat down on the settle.

"Chance?" said he, roughly, while his face clouded. "Sorrow chance! He'll be hung, as sure as I've this pipe in me hand."

"Lord have mercy on his sowl, the craythur!" moaned his wife.

"Oh, musha! amin," said her husband, sighing. "I'm goin' in wud the cowlt to the fair to-morra, an' to see the last of him. It's niver I thought to see poor Mick Welsh's son on a gallus!"

The sun was setting over the opposite hill, where the tall many-storied houses rose in terraces and steep lanes, and was shedding the last beams of his radiance on the large dark stone building which crowned the height. The red light seemed to be concentrated on one part of the building, where there was an iron gateway, spiked and double-locked. Far above in the dark massive wall was a small black door. And beneath this door and around this gateway, men were busy, putting up strong timber railings; while a crowd, talking and gesticulating, constantly pressed in upon the workmen, and were driven back by officials in uniform and a few soldiers.

Inside the massive walls, other workmen were busy, but their work was commonplace enough. Something was wrong with the great main sewer of the jail. Masons and bricklayers had been labouring for some hours; and now, when the city clocks and bells were striking six, they were taking up their tools, putting on their coats, and leaving their work till next day.

There were no rough jests among them. One man laughed as a companion slipped down into the slimy ditch whence they had emerged; but his merriment was checked by an involuntary look from the others towards the far side of the yard, where a man in a felon's dress and with manacled hands was walking slowly up and down.

"Lord have mercy on his sowl!" muttered an old mason, compassionately. "Poor Tim Welsh! As honest a boy afore he got into bad company, as iver a father rared."

Whether the prisoner had caught the sound of his name or not, he raised his head and looked sadly towards them.

"Lord help him!" said two or three of the men, "for makin' away with one poor sheep:—what a rich man had plenty of!"

An official came across the yard to look at their day's work, and after asking some questions, walked away, saying, "Come along now, the gate is open."

So, casting a backward glance at the manacled prisoner, the men passed through an arch into an inner court, whence the great doors opened to let them out into the street.

The manacled man gazed after their retreating figures, with a sigh—almost a groan—as he thought of their return to their homes, free and happy from their honest labour while he——the "rap, rap, rap, tap, tap" of carpenters' hammers outside beat at the thought he could not dwell upon.

There was no one with him, no one near him, but a turnkey pacing up and down an angle of the building; for in those days there was far less vigilance than now. He was not confined to his cell on this, the last day of his life, but was permitted to walk about the quadrangles of the prison; apart from the other criminals, however, and securely handcuffed.

Bitter and despairing were his thoughts. He thought of his grey-haired widowed mother, of his stalwart young brothers, of the lads he had played ball with, of Katie Moran, whom he had danced with at the fair only two months ago. Mechanically he walked across the square to the place where the bricklayers and masons had been busy: thinking as he did so, half unconsciously, how large the opening was, how long the great sewer was, and where it emptied itself. Suddenly a thought occurred to him, making his pale thin face flush, and his fettered hands tremble with excitement. He turned sharply

away lest he should excite suspicion, and loitered with his former heavy weary step towards the doorway of the inner court-yard.

"Goin' in, are you?" said the turnkey.

"Yes," replied the prisoner.

The official stalked on before him into the adjoining square, then opening a door, passed through a long stone corridor, and stopping before a cell door, unlocked it. "If you want anything, you can call," he said, graciously, through the trap in the door as he relocked it.

"Thank ye," answered the condemned man. If the official had been better skilled in reading faces, he might have looked to the fastening of the cell-door a little more carefully.

Tim Welsh had noticed that the bolt of the lock was very shaky, and he knew that a shaky bolt can be forced back.

It would not be dusk for a long while yet, but he could not wait; the one chance—desperate—hopeless, as it seemed—must be tried quickly. While the turnkey's steps re-echoed in his hearing, he, still fettered, unscrewed the iron leg of his bedstead, and, stealing forward, waited until he heard the great doors at the end of the corridor clash; then, putting the leg of the bedstead between the bolt and the wall, he strove with all his strength to force it back. But it resisted, and he dared not make a noise.

In despair he replaced the leg, and sat down to recover breath. Soon, he heard another turnkey coming. He went to the cell-door and called.

"What is it? What d'ye want?"

"A dhrink of wather, plase; I'm very thirsty."

When the turnkey had brought in the water, and retired, Welsh, who had been watching the lock, saw that, though gone to its place, it was not half as far home as before. He drank the water to cool his burning mouth and parched throat, and, seizing the iron leg again, listened as before until the doors clashed, when, placing the instrument in the old place, he—first gently shaking the bolt—gave it a vigorous blow, the sound of which was lost in the noisy echoes from the shutting doors. The bolt shot back, he pulled the door open, and peered around; returning to his bed, he replaced the leg, and made up a bundle under the clothes, as well as he could, with the aid of the bolster; then closing the cell-door softly after him, he ran lightly down the gallery to the door that opened into the yard. The key was in it, he turned the key, and, glancing around for the second time, shut it after him and darted across to the arched doorway, where a sentry paced.

How to get past this soldier was the question, while he trembled in mingled horror at the sound of the "rap-rap" "rap, tap-tap" coming freshly to his ears, and the thought of probable freedom, and more probable recapture. At this moment the sentry turned back on his beat, and the prisoner, crouching in the doorway, stole swiftly along by the wall to the opposite side of the yard, and slunk in beside a buttress. The open sewer was on the same side but further down. Trembling in every limb, he lay huddled up, not daring to move, lest he should attract attention, until the sentry turned for the third time. Then he fled along by the wall, and dropping into the sewer crept into the darkness there.

"Safe for a while, anyhow, glory be to God!" he gasped.

But as the poor creature pushed his way onward, through the foul air, in a stooping position with his fettered hands pushed out before him to feel his way, a deadly sickness came over him. Still the faintly glimmering prospect of escape kept him up.

Fortunately there were but few rats. Five or six times he felt them biting at his feet, from which his coarse stockings had long been cut to pieces, and heard them squeaking as they scrambled up the dripping walls. "Will I iver smell a fresh breeze again, Lord help me!" he groaned. As he crawled along under the principal streets he could hear the carriages rolling over his head, and at one grating to which he came, he heard the words of a song, chorused by some men near a public-house. At length, after he had been more than eight hours on his way, he heard the rolling of the river, saw a faint gleam through the pitchy darkness, felt a faint fresh breeze from the flowing tide. A few more steps—falling in his eagerness—and the glimmer grew clearer, the breeze grew fresher, and he reached the river bank.

It was just four o'clock, and the clear solemn light of the dawn was shed over the sleeping city; the gardens were fresh in early fruit and flowers; the noble river rippling serenely on, and the cottages, trees, and meadows lay far on the other side. Very far off they looked, and the river—cold, broad, and deep, lay between; yet the undaunted fugitive, fettered, aching, sick, exhausted, muttered another prayer, and plunged in.

The cold water gave him a temporary strength; keeping his eyes fixed on the goal of his hopes, he swam on, almost entirely by the movement of his legs and feet, as his hands were nearly useless to him.

But the bracing effect of the cold shock was soon followed by a distressing numbness. His utmost efforts barely sufficed to keep his head above water and propel him slowly onward. Slower and fainter became each stroke, and a wave of the rising tide rushed over his head, when with a gurgling moan he made a last effort and his feet touched the bottom. He now stood upright, and slowly waded to the low muddy shore, where he sank down on the sedge and sea-pinks, and swooned away.

"I must be stirrin' meself," said Pat Moran to his wife, about half-past four o'clock that morning. "I've a power to do. I've to take the cowlt to the fair, an' the turnip field to plough afore I go."

Just as the first beams of golden sunlight were resting on the cabin chimneys, and on the high buildings of the city hills opposite, he led his two horses from their stable to the

field by the river, where the plough lay, and having yoked them he began turning up the furrows afresh.

"It's a fine mornin', glory be to God!" he soliloquised, "on'y fer the poor sowl that's to see the last of it. Musha! What's that? Woa, thin," he cried, suddenly catching sight of something which looked like a heap of muddy clothes. "Lord save us!" And without losing a moment, he ran down to where the unconscious man was lying, face downward, on the sedge.

Pat Moran's first impulse was to run for help; his next to raise the body gently and drag it further up. The motion aroused the poor half-dead creature.

"Who, in heaven's name, are ye, an' what brought ye here?" inquired the farmer, looking in terror at the handcuffs.

"I'm—aren't you Pat Moran?"

"Yes."

"Pat, ye knew me poor father. I'm Tim Welsh, the poor fellow that's to be hanged to-day. Won't ye thry an' save me, for the love of God? I've come through the sewer. I'm all night creepin' through it, an' I swam the river, an' I'm 'most gone! Won't ye thry an' save me, Pat Moran, and the Lord 'll remimber it to you an' your childher for iver."

"Tim Welsh! Lord be good to me. What am I to do wud ye? I'm done for, if you're found wud me, an' how can I save ye? What am I to do? Sure 'tisn't in the regard of sayin' that I wouldn't do a good turn for ye, Tim, but the counthry 'll be roused afther ye, an' where'll I hide ye, or what'll I do at all?" Thus groaned the farmer as he opened the little gate and led him into the kitchen, where Kate was baking a griddle cake for breakfast.

"Father, honey! O lor! What's that!" she cried, as the tottering figure in the soaked discoloured garments came into the cheerful light of the turf fire.

"Whisht, acushla! It's Tim Welsh," he whispered. Kate sprang up from her knees, and her face grew white.

"Kate, honey, what are we to do wud him?" said her father, trembling, as he recounted the manner of Tim's escape.

"Hide him, father!" she cried, with all a woman's impulsive generosity. "The Lord pity you!" she added, bursting into tears at sight of the wretched object before her.

"I'll do what I can, Tim. Give him a bit to ate, Katie. I'll spake to some one I can thrust."

"Pat, me life is in your hands," broke in the fugitive.

"Never fear, avick. I'll do me best for ye." He hurried away a few hundred yards to the house of his landlord, a Protestant minister; he knocked furiously at his front door, and was admitted by a sleepy maid-servant.

"Somethin' I want to spake to the masther about—I'm goin' to the fair this mornin'—tell him I'm in a great hurry, af ye plase."

After a minute's delay the gentleman appeared.

"Somethin' very particular, sir," said the farmer, in a low voice. "About that cow you were spakin' to me, sir," he added, for the maid-servant's benefit.

"Come into my study here, Moran," said his landlord.

"Be your lave, sir, I'll shut the door," said Moran. Then walking over to the table he put his clasped hands on it.

"Misther Raymond, I can thrust you. I'm in a great hobble, sir, an' I dunno what to do at all. Misther Raymond, you was always a kind friend, and a good friend, and you'll not betray me? It's another man's saycret, an' you must give me your word, sir, else I'd be afeard to let mortal man hear me."

"Moran, if you think I can promise as a man and a Christian, I will. You may trust me, whatever it is," said Mr. Raymond.

Thus assured the farmer unfolded his story, and begged his landlord's counsel.

"I hardly know how to advise you, Moran," said he, as soon as he could speak coherently in his astonishment. "The poor fellow will be found out, I'm afraid, in spite of all you can do, and you'll get into great trouble. Have his handcuffs filed off at all events," he went on in a low tone. "Martin Leary will do it, and you can trust him, and maybe the best you can do is to give the fugitive some of your clothes, and some food, and this." He took a guinea from a drawer. "Bury his prison clothes carefully in the manure pit, and start him on the road to Wexford. That is all you can do safely, but be quick!"

The farmer left the house and ran on to the blacksmith's forge, where the smith and his son were getting to work.

"Martin, I'm in a great hurry, goin' to the fair, an' I wan't ye to run over wud somethin' to cut a chain for me; 'twon't take you five minutes. Martin you niver did a bether day's work in your life if you'll come as fast as yere legs'll carry ye!" He said this in an under tone while the son's back was turned, "and whisht for all sakes!" he added, clenching his hand and shaking it at the unconscious young Vulcan; then he rushed out, leaving the father grasping a bar of iron and staring after him.

The smith, with the freemansory that exists among the Irish peasantry, perceived that there was secresy and trouble in the way, and that his good faith was relied on. He picked up some tools, muttered an excuse to his son, and followed, hastily.

When Pat Moran reached home he was met at the door by Kate.

"Is he safe?"

"Yes, father, he's in the room atin' a bit."

Her father went in, and going up to his strange guest said, "I'm goin' to do what I can for you, Tim," Then they all began discussing eagerly the best way for the fugitive to take.

"But Lord! The whole counthry'll be roused afther him!" broke in the farmer, dejectedly, as they suggested various lonely hill-paths and cross-cuts. "Lord! They'll root up the ground after him! I must thry though, I must thry.

Heaven mend me! Aff I didn't lave the horses all this time, an' niver," he ejaculated, catching sight of his forgotten team, who had dragged the plough after them to the adjoining meadow, and were grazing there.

A sudden thought struck him, and he hastily returned to the house with his face flushed. As he entered the kitchen he ran against the smith, Martin Leary, who was staring about him.

"Martin, you're thrue an' honest, I know, an' you'd do a good turn as soon as any man I know," said Pat Moran, abruptly.

"There's me hand on it," returned the smith, bringing down his black fist on the other's shoulder. In a few words he was told what was required of him, and also of the bright thought that had just occurred to Pat Moran.

"Here! Let me at it," cried the smith, enthusiastically grasping his chisel and hammer. Thereupon the farmer led him into the little room, where Kate was administering hot tea and smoking griddle-cake to the poor fellow, who ate and drank almost mechanically, with his eyes fixed on the pretty face and busy hands that ministered to him.

"Here, Tim's some one to do you a good turn. Hould out your hands, me boy! Peggy," turning to his wife, who was devoutly groaning and telling her beads in a corner, "go an' get me ould clothes, an' Kitty, run for that yellow clay in the kitchen-garden! Run!" She did as she was bid, and when she returned with the clay, was desired to keep out of the room for a few minutes.

"Mother, honey, what are they doing?" she inquired.

"Sorra bit o' me knows, acushla On'y your father has some plan in his head. Oh! Kitty, agra, I'm thrimblin to think of the throuble he may be gittin into.—Och, Pat, honey, what are ye goin' to do at all?" she cried, addressing her husband, who came out of the bedroom, dressed in his best blue swallow-tailed coat, corduroys, and new grey stockings.

"I'm goin' to show this new sarvint boy where he's to plough, afore I go to the fair;" said the farmer, with a wink to the two women, who stared open-eyed at the change of the condemned man with the fatal prison garb dripping with mud and sand, and fettered wrists, into a careless easy-going looking young labourer, in a suit of well-worn and patched frieze and corduroy, dirty and clayey, with lumps of clay sticking on his brogues, a rakish "caubeen" slouched over his eyes, and a black "dhudeen" between his lips.

"Now come on! 'Tis time you were at your work; his name's Maurice Slattery, Kate, an' he's wud us this month back!"

"Oh, father, honey! Oh, Pat, acushla!" cried the wife and daughter, with admiration.

The young man taking the pipe from his mouth, said solemnly, "May God for iver bless you, Pat Moran, an' you Mrs. Moran, and you, Kate, an' you, Martin Leary," and he grasped their hands all round.

"Come, 'tis six o'clock," said the farmer. "You know where the plough is, Maurice Slattery. You've a new piece of iron to melt, Martin. An', Kate, you've to bury them clothes. Come an' I'll show you where."

Half an hour afterwards he was riding slowly to the fair on his young horse which was to be sold, casting cautious glances backward at the field by the river, where he could see his horses ploughing, and his new servant boy toiling quietly after them.

Such confusion and excitement had not been known for years in the old cathedral town. Police there were none in those days; but the whole garrison had turned out in search of the escaped felon. Groups of red-coats perambulated the streets, the roads leading to the country, and even the lanes and meadows. Hundreds of country folk who had come in to see the execution, also crowded the town. The throng on the prison-hill was so dense that the farmer could scarcely proceed a step. They were all talking vociferously in Irish or English, every one giving his or her version of the wonderful story. Some declared that the prisoner had not escaped, and that it was a device of the authorities to conceal some foul play. When Pat Moran had elbowed his way with great difficulty almost to the prison-gates, he looked eagerly for the objects of his search, some of Tim's own people, whom he discovered sitting and standing together in an excited group.

"Pat Moran, d'ye bleeve this?" said one of the men, hoarsely, clutching the farmer's coat. "D'ye bleeve that poor Tim has got out of their cursed thrap?"

"John Welsh, Tim did get out!"

"Whisht! Lord save us!" they all broke in with one voice.

"'Tisn't safe to say more. I'm thrimblin' that some o' them fellows wid the brass buttons will hear me," glancing towards the turnkey, dimly visible behind the iron grating; "but you, John Welsh, an' you, Mick Power, come wud a car to-night to the cross-roads beyant the ferry, at twelve o'clock, an' there'll be a *friend* to see ye. Whisht, for your sowls!"

The prison warders were not long in discovering by what means the captive had effected his escape, and from the opening, the search was carried above-ground to the mouth of the sewer where it emptied itself into the river. A venturesome spirit even crept up a few dozen yards of the black passage, but speedily returned, vowing that nothing could live half an hour in it. Nevertheless, they sought for footmarks on the river brink; but the friendly tide had been before them. Still, on the supposition that he might have lived to reach the river, and swim across, a party of prison officials and soldiers was ferried over, and marched in a body to Farmer Moran's house.

Kate was busy feeding chickens, and her mother peeling potatoes, when they both caught sight of the gleam of scarlet and white cross-belts, and heard loud tones and footsteps.

"Lord, be good and marciful to us ever-

more, amin! Protect and save us!" muttered Peggy Moran, dropping the potato she was peeling, and turning with a face of terror to her daughter, who whispered, without turning her head,

"Mother, darlin', don't purtend anything, for all sakes. Chucky, chucky! Chuck, chuck, chuck!" she went on, raising her voice gaily, as she scattered the food.

"Servant, sir," she said, wiping her hands and curtseying to a tall stout officer, who strode up to the door, scattering the chickens by the clanking of his spurs and sword.

"Is this Farmer Moran's, my good girl?"

"Yes, sir."

"Are you his daughter?"

"Yes, sir, and this is my mother."

"Where's your husband, Mrs. Moran?" said the officer, turning to the poor woman, who was endeavouring to look calm.

"At the fair, sir—oh sure, 'tisn't got into any harm Pat has, sir?"

"What harm should he get into—about this runaway prisoner you mean?" said the officer, trying to startle her into some admission.

"What man, sir?" cried Kate. "Law, mother, honey! That's what that boy was telling us!"

"What boy?" said the officer, now off his guard.

"A boy, sir—oh! a ra'al little chap—a gossoon—run in here a while ago an' said the man that's to be hung's got out an' run away—an sure we didn't bleeve him!" said Kate, with such an air of self possession and innocent inquisitiveness that the officer was completely deceived. A boy *had* come in as she had said, and told the wonderful story, so she spoke the truth in that part of her assertion.

"Well, Mrs. Moran," said the officer, "you've no objection to have your premises searched, I suppose? It is suspected that the prisoner is hidden somewhere about here."

"Musha, what put that into yere heads?" said Peggy Moran, angrily. "Faith! it's somethin' else we'd be thinkin' of, an' not meddlin' wud the law; but you're welcome to sarch away, sir, as long as ye like, on'y its a quare thing to have an honest man's house sarched like a rogue's!"

"I must do my duty," said the officer.

"Sure the gintleman won't do us any hurt, mother," said Kate. "Please don't let 'em thrample the potatoes, sir!" she called out as the men turned into the little garden.

Pat Moran's words were almost fulfilled, that the pursuers would root up the ground in search of the fugitive. Not a bush or a hollow about the ground, not a loft or cranny in the house or out-building but was thoroughly investigated. At last with a sickening feeling of apprehension Kate saw the band disperse themselves over the fields, and three soldiers run across the ploughed field to question the man who was ploughing.

Welsh's blood ran cold as he saw them coming; but recollecting that they did not know his face, he glanced over his shoulder, and shouted in a feigned voice to the horses.

The soldiers were young and careless. They merely asked two or three questions in an irrelevant way, staring up at the sky, and down at the clay, as if they expected to discover the prisoner transformed into a spirit of earth or air. Then they ran off again; and Welsh breathed freely until he spied six other soldiers advancing towards him, with the officer in charge, and two others in dark frock-coats with shining buttons and red collars.

"God help me! Sure I can only die!" he murmured.

"How long have you been ploughing?" said the officer.

"Sence daybreak, sir. Woa! An' hard work I have had, every one runnin' to me sence breakfast, axin' me did I see the man that run away. Steady there!" The labourer sulkily keeping his back towards the prison warders.

"He is supposed to have swum the river," said the officer; "and if so, and you have been here since daybreak, he could not have got over without you seeing him."

"Sorra haporte I see, sure, if he did; an' he must be a brave swimmer to come across that river this time o' year, ain' the wather like ice," said the ploughboy, with an incredulous grin; "sure he might land down farther, it's a grad'a'al narrer, but anyhow I see nothin'—Conshume ye, straight!" he growled at the horses, and bending double over the plough, furrowed on. The officer called his men hurriedly back to the country road.

The long day drew to a close, and when Kate came to call the ploughboy to his supper, whispering that there was no one in but her father and mother, he felt as if he had lived a lifetime in the past twenty-four hours.

The farmer laughed heartily in telling some of the stories which were rife about the prisoner's disappearance. His body had been picked up four miles down the river, his clothes had been found by a turnkey under a bush, and his handcuffs had been picked up—filed half across—in a bog ten miles away.

"Faith I bursted laughin'," said Pat Moran, "when I knew that Martin Leary had 'em welded into linch-pins, an' that Katy had the clothes buried in last year's manure hape!"

So they chatted pleasantly and securely, while the rescued man sat silent from thankfulness and gratitude, only casting side looks at Kate and sighing heavily.

"Musha, man, don't be sighin'!" cried the farmer, jocosely; "you'll be kickin' up yere heels at your weddin' in Ameriky this time twelvemonth, plase God!"

"No, Misther Moran, I'll never marry any one in Ameriky," answered Welsh.

Kate got up to put on fresh fuel immediately.

"Och, niver fear, you will," replied the farmer, with good-natured obtuseness.

"Musha, Misther Moran, 'tisn't every man 'ud give his daughter to one like me," said Welsh, in a low tone.

"Arrah, Tim, agra, who'd think the worse o' you for havin' got into throuble an' got out agin'?" pursued the farmer.

"Ah, 'tisn't every one is like you," said Welsh, sighing.

"Oh, sure no one will know anything in Ameriky, Tim; that's where you're goin' I suppose?" said Mrs. Moran, gravely and coldly.

"Yes, ma'am," answered Welsh. "I hope so."

The good woman was far more acute than her husband, and disliking the turn the conversation was taking, began to introduce other topics; but with little success, as her husband grew sleepy and stupid, Kate sat quite silent, and Welsh was sad. Thus they sat until twelve had struck, and then Welsh and the farmer rose, to walk on to the cross roads, where the car was to be in readiness, with his relatives as convoy and body guard.

Welsh shook Mrs. Moran's hard hand and kissed it in the fulness of his emotion, uttering broken words of gratitude and blessing. Then he turned to Kate, who was weeping silently; he strove to speak, but words failed him, and he grasped her hand passionately and turned away.

"I'll shut the gate afther ye," said Kate, following them out into the darkness. So she did, and Welsh delayed a moment, helping her to find the loop and staple, probably; though he strove to put a few hasty words together, which had no reference to the gate.

"Keep up yere heart, Kate, agra," he whispered; "I'll send ye a lether whin I get safe over, plase God!"

Welsh sailed for England in a small coasting vessel, and thence from Liverpool, where he remained concealed for some weeks until the ardour of the pursuit after him had abated, he embarked on board a fast-sailing vessel—for there were no steamers in those days—for America. When he landed, he sought the home of a relative who had been settled in the new country for some years, and, by industry and strict honesty—for the dreadful lesson taught him was not wasted—he very soon became independent of his cousin, and had his own snug house and thriving farm.

He wrote regularly to the Morans; to the father first, then to the mother, and, lastly, to the daughter. When he had amassed a little money he wrote again to the farmer, telling the astonished man his hopes and wishes concerning Kate. Peggy Moran angrily declared her husband to have been blind all along—as there is no doubt he was—but she positively refused to listen for a moment to the audacious suitor. However, "time works wonders." Her violent opposition died away gradually, and Kate waited patiently. At the end of five years, her father being then dead, she and her mother departed for the land beyond the sea.

This true story was related to the writer by a grey-haired widow, an Irish emigrant who had returned, after many years, from America, to die at home. Though her form was bent by the weight of more than seventy years, her memory was clear and retentive, and her voice trembled and her dim blue eyes sparkled, as of yore, with excitement in her recital of the perils undergone by Welsh, the lover of her youth, and the fond and faithful husband whose joys and sorrows she had shared for forty years. And now she had come home to die in the little cottage by the river where she had first known him, and where she had first succoured him in the hour of his danger and distress. "On'y it's a poor thing to think that I can't share his grave in the churchyard where his people lie," concluded the widow, sadly, "but bless God, we'll soon meet again."

HENRY THE EIGHTH'S CHIN.

Shakespeare's play of Henry the Eighth opens with a conversation, between the Dukes of Buckingham and Norfolk, about the glories of the celebrated Field of the Cloth of Gold. And, surely, the sight must have been worth seeing, which could have so far outshone the ordinary pageantry of such a time, as to become famous for ever in the annals of two kingdoms.

What was meant by the brilliant show? In the same conversation, admiration of the pageant itself soon gives place to disgust at Cardinal Wolsey, as its author. We hear, that the alliance celebrated with all this gorgeous display had already burst like a bubble,

"For France hath flawed the league, and hath attached
Our merchants' goods at Bordeaux."

Truly it was a very hollow affair; seen through, perfectly well understood on both sides to be hollow. But we must add one comment in the interest of historic justice. The perfidy which brought about the rupture, so soon after these grand demonstrations of amity, was not on the side of France.

Henry the Eighth was, at the time of the Field of the Cloth of Gold, much younger than we usually see him in portraits, or read of him in history. As yet, he had not quite acquired all that fulness of body with which Holbein has made us familiar. Thought of divorce had not yet occupied him. Tall, strong, and muscular, he took part in all manly exercises, and excelled in all. "His majesty," says the Venetian ambassador Giustinian, in a despatch intended only for the eyes of his court, "is twenty-nine years old, and extremely handsome. Nature could not have done more for him. He is much handsomer than any other sovereign in Christendom; a great deal handsomer than the king of France; very fair, and his whole frame admirably proportioned. On hearing that Francis the First wore a beard, he allowed his own to grow; and, as it is reddish, he has now got a beard that looks like gold. He is very accomplished; a good musician; composes well; is a most capital horseman; a fine jouster; speaks good French, Latin, and Spanish; is very religious; hears three masses daily when he hunts, and some-

times five on other days. He hears the office every day in the queen's chamber; that is to say, vesper and compline. He is very fond of hunting, and never takes his diversion without tiring eight or ten horses, which he causes to be stationed beforehand along the line of country he means to take; and when one is tired he mounts another, and, before he gets home, they are all exhausted. He is extremely fond of tennis, at which game it is the prettiest thing in the world to see him play, his fair skin glowing through a shirt of the finest texture."

And in perfect accordance with this, is the testimony of another Venetian, Pasqualigo, a year or two earlier: "His majesty is the handsomest potentate I ever set eyes on; above the usual height, with an extremely fine calf to his leg; his complexion very fair and bright, with auburn hair combed straight and short in the French fashion, and a round face, so very beautiful that it would become a pretty woman, his throat being rather long and thick."

A muscular frame; good animal spirits; and general good humour. Who is not captivated by such qualities? And though Henry had kingly dignity, too, which not the very boldest would have ventured for a moment to slight, he had yet a familiarity and condescension at times, which would have scorned the restraints of a cold and lifeless etiquette. In a household book of the Earl of Devon, we find an entry which brings these characteristics out in strong relief; where, among a multitude of other petty payments, is the following: "To a lad at Charleton, for lending his cap to my lord when the king and his lords threw snowballs, fourpence."

But though Henry was no slave to etiquette, there were fashions in that day as in this; and, it would seem that in that day as in this, the fashions came from France. Not only was it "on hearing that Francis the First wore a beard," that Henry allowed his own to grow, but, as we have seen above, Pasqualigo found that he combed his hair "straight and short in the French fashion." Pasqualigo also reported of him as follows: "He speaks French, English, and Latin, and a little Italian; plays well on the lute and harpsichord, sings from book at sight, draws the bow with greater strength than any man in England, and jousts marvellously." The day after this was written happened to be May-day, and the ambassador was called at an early hour, to see the king go a-Maying. He found the king's bodyguard dressed all in green, like foresters, with bows and arrows; and Henry himself wore a suit entirely of the same colour. Even his shoes were green. Breakfast was served in the bowers of Greenwich Park, and Pasqualigo had a further interview with Henry, which he describes as follows:

"His majesty came into our arbor, and addressing me in French, said, 'Talk with me awhile. The king of France, is he as tall as I am?' I told him there was but little difference. He continued, 'Is he as stout?' I said he was not; and he then inquired 'What sort of legs has he?' I replied, 'Spare.' Whereupon he opened the front of his doublet, and, placing his hand on his thigh, said, 'Look here; and I have also a good calf to my leg.' He then told me that he was very fond of this king of France, and that, on more than three occasions he was very near him with his army, but that he would never allow himself to be seen, and always retreated; which his majesty attributed to deference for King Lewis, who did not choose an engagement to take place."

Francis the First, of whom this was said, had ascended the French throne only four months previously: a young and dashing king, in whom men looked for a revival of something of the old spirit of chivalry. Henry evidently regarded him as a rival, whom he was anxious to out-do, mind, body, and legs, in the eyes of the world; and this thought must have been frequently in his mind during the negotiations for the grand interview between them, which had begun to be talked about almost as soon as Francis became king. The proposal for it, indeed, seems originally to have come from Francis; but it met with the most cordial response from Henry, who, there can be little doubt, was anxious, not only to see his rival, but to exhibit his own magnificence, and personal accomplishments, before his rival's subjects; to show heads and legs with Francis before France itself.

For two or three years, however, the project cooled. Francis, at the beginning of his reign set off on an Italian expedition which did not please Henry, and the relations between them were not altogether cordial. But the clouds seemed to have dispersed when, at the end of three years, a treaty was made, which was supposed to rivet firmly the alliance of the two kings, by a project of marriage between the dauphin and the infant princess Mary. Then the place of emperor fell vacant, and Francis was an unsuccessful candidate. He applied to his new ally of England to support him in his candidature, and Henry not only promised him all sorts of testimonials, but afterwards assured him, through Sir Thomas Boleyn, that, though his efforts had been unsuccessful, he had done all he could to help his election. Nevertheless, one of the French king's agents, being behind the tapestry when the Marquis of Brandenburg gave audience to Richard Pace, the English ambassador, distinctly overheard a speech from that diplomatist, urging, that none but a German should have the imperial dignity. Francis was therefore quite well aware that Henry, for all his assurances, instead of trying to promote his election, had really used every effort to defeat it; the fact being that he was a double dealer in this matter, both to Francis and to his competitor Charles. For with less than his usual wisdom, Henry himself entered the field, as a third candidate; and, though he had at first advocated the claims of Charles, he afterwards did all he could for himself only.

That Francis was indignant, as well he might be, at this perfidy, we know from the conversa-

tions he had with the Venetian ambassador, Giustinian, on his return from England. But he thought it prudent to dissemble his real feelings, and to profess much friendship. For various reasons, it seems that he could not afford to fall out with his brother of England. So, the language of diplomacy between the two courts continued as sweet as honey; nor was the project of a meeting one whit the less genuinely entertained, because the professions of cordiality on both sides were empty wind. When it was deferred for a year, Sir Thomas Boleyn, who was ambassador at the French court, was instructed to tell Francis, that the King of England had resolved to wear his beard till the interview should take place, as a proof of his desire for it. The response to this was a matter of course. Francis at once laid his hand upon his own beard and said, "Surely he would never put it off till he had seen the king of England."

Alas, for the promises of princes! These mutual pledges were given in August, and Henry had shaved by the following November! The fact was most unquestionably ominous, and it was not long, before the shaving of King Henry the Eighth was known at the court of France, where it seems to have had a more depressing influence than any one cared to avow. Francis himself, indeed, does not appear to have taken any notice of it, but he betrayed some anxiety to learn news from Sir Thomas Boleyn, and when Sir Thomas replied that he had none, "By the faith of a gentleman," he said, laying his hand upon his bosom, "but for my confident expectation of this interview, I would at this moment have been at Milan." But Louise of Savoy, the French king's mother, ventured to speak more plainly, and to press the English ambassador for an explanation. She told him that she had been distinctly informed by Montpesat, a French nobleman who had just returned from England (where he had been kept as a hostage for the fulfilment of the last treaties) that the King of England had been shaving, and asked if Boleyn knew what he meant by it. The ambassador's ingenuity seems to have been taxed for an excuse, but he managed tolerably well. "I said," he wrote to Wolsey, "that Montpesat had been with me at my lodging and told me likewise; and further said that, as I supposed, it hath been by the queen's desire; for I told my lady that I have here afore time known when the king's grace hath worn long his beard, that the queen hath daily made him great instance, and desired him to put it off, for her sake."

French politeness could not but be satisfied with such an explanation. It was impossible to hold the King of England to his promise when the queen wanted his chin smooth. And, very likely, the excuse offered was the true one; for there is no doubt at all, that if Catherine of Arragon was not against the English beard movement, she was against the immediate cause of it, and did not greatly conceal her dislike to the proposed interview of Henry the Eighth and Francis. Indeed, little more than two months before it actually took place, she had a conference about it, with some of the English nobles who were strong against a French alliance. For Catherine was anxious that her husband should rather cultivate the friendship of her nephew, Charles the Fifth, then newly made emperor, who also talked of a meeting with Henry; but a really cordial union with France would have prevented any cordiality with Charles. And, in truth, Henry's own wishes were not very different from hers. He, too, wished for an alliance with the emperor, only he wished the emperor to seek it of him. But the emperor's proposals for an interview with Henry were as cool, as those of Francis were warm and eager; so, under the knowing policy of Wolsey, all encouragement was given to the French advances.

Under these circumstances, however, Boleyn's answer to Madame Louise had just one fault. The excuse was a little *too* probable. Louise asked Boleyn, significantly, if the Queen of England were not Charles's aunt. "Madam," he replied, "he is her sister's son; but the King of England has greater affection for your son than for any king living." It was impossible to press the ambassador further. Madame expressed the greatest satisfaction and said: "Their love is not in the beards, but in the hearts." But it was not there either. When Henry the Eighth appeared without a beard at the Field of the Cloth of Gold, the love was on his lips and nowhere else. His lips were lying while he told truth with his chin.

DUEL FIGHTING.

IN TWO CHAPTERS. SECOND CHAPTER.

We resume the adventures of the Marquis de Lignano and his most particular and intimate friend, Lucien Claveaux.

One summer's evening, towards seven o'clock, and at the moment when the inhabitants of Bordeaux turn out of doors to breathe the cool refreshing air, at the close of some sultry day, the Marquis de Lignano, accompanied by a couple of his creatures, took up a position in the Rue Sainte Catherine, at the corner of the gallery. The marquis was elegantly dressed and delicately gloved, according to his habit, and carried in his hand a thin flexible switch, with which he played like a man who is happy and contented with himself. From time to time, however, he showed signs of impatience, and, eventually, abruptly quitted his position at the angle of two streets, and going into the middle of the road, gazed for a minute or two in the direction of the Place de la Comédie. Evidently disappointed in his expectations, he returned to his two comrades, exchanged a few words with them, and resumed his scrutiny. After a few turns backwards and forwards, the marquis again approached his acolytes, and said to them in an undertone:

"Now, pay particular attention; here comes my man."

The individual whom the marquis styled his man, was a distinguished-looking personage, young, handsome, and well dressed, and was engaged in humming a lively tune while leisurely pursuing his way, apparently indifferent to everything around. He was much surprised when, at a few yards from the corner of the street, our bully advanced towards him and saluted him with mock politeness. The young man stopped suddenly, but, before he had time to speak, the marquis, holding out his switch on a level with his knees, said to him:

"I beg your pardon, sir, but give yourself the trouble to jump over this."

The young man looked hard at his interrupter for a moment, then smiled, and jumped over the switch and, still smiling, went his way, fully believing the marquis to be a lunatic. This mistake simply saved his life. The marquis on his part, stupefied at the charming complacency shown by the young man in so readily acquiescing in his demand, became furious. His design had signally failed, and might fail a second, and even a third time. Under any circumstances all had to be gone through again, and as it was necessary that he should select his intended victim, he had to wait before he could renew his experiment.

At length the wished for moment arrived. While the marquis was looking towards the Place de la Comédie, he observed, some distance off, a young officer of the garrison advancing along the footpath. This time it was more than probable something serious would result, and the marquis therefore made a sign to his friends, so that they might be prepared for any emergency. Each moment brought the officer nearer to these three scoundrels. He proved to be a young man about five-and-twenty years of age, who was already a captain, and consequently carried his head high. With his left hand resting on the hilt of his sword, he strolled along, with that easy carelessness which is the soldier's privilege under all circumstances.

When he had arrived within a few yards of the marquis, the latter advanced towards him with his accustomed air of politeness, and holding out his switch as he had done before, repeated his invitation in these terms:

"Monsieur le Capitaine, be kind enough to jump over this switch."

The officer halted and haughtily surveyed the insolent individual before him from head to foot, at first without the slightest symptom of anger, but also without fear—in truth, he was not quite certain that he had not a madman to deal with. When the marquis observed this temporary hesitation, he saw the officer was prepared to resist him, and believing he had found the man he wanted, drew himself up, and in a haughty tone ordered him to jump forthwith. Indignant at this insolent provocation, the officer thought the proper thing to do was to send the switch with a kick into the middle of the road, and then to soundly box the marquis's ears. The latter on being struck more than once danced about and stormed, and his rage prevented him from uttering a single intelligible word. Meanwhile his two accomplices endeavoured to appease him, for a crowd had collected around. The young officer, who had not lost his composure for a moment, having given his address, prepared to elbow his way through the throng, seemingly utterly indifferent to the scrape in which he had thoughtlessly involved himself.

The following day, about eight o'clock in the morning, the Marquis de Lignano and his two seconds repaired to a little wood in the commune of Pessac, quite close to Bordeaux, where they found their adversary of the night before, who had brought with him two officers and the doctor of his regiment. It had been arranged that the duel should be fought with the small-sword, and, on the part of the marquis, it had been stipulated, that slight wounds were not to count, and that the contest should only terminate when one of them had fallen. In short, enough blood was required to wipe out the injuries which the marquis considered he had sustained.

According to the universally recognised code of the duel, from the moment when the seconds place the swords in the hands of the two adversaries, each combatant, no matter what may be the reason that has brought them face to face, is alike sacred against insult on the part of the other. The Marquis de Lignano, nevertheless, had the insolence to hold out his switch again in front of his adversary, and to say to him,

"Monsieur le Capitaine, there is yet time. Will you jump now?"

"Sir," replied the officer, coldly, "he who insults his adversary on the ground is a contemptible scoundrel."

"You will not jump, then? Well, all the worse for you;" and with a rapid movement he drew his switch across the officer's face.

The marquis's seconds laughed; as to the officer's seconds and the doctor, they reddened with indignation at having to do with such scum of society.

The two opponents took up their positions. The marquis was a peculiar, but not a first-rate, swordsman. In order, therefore, that he might finish off his adversary as quickly as possible, he sought to tire him during the first two or three minutes, harassing him with all manner of feints until, overcome with fatigue, he should lay himself open to an easy thrust. Watching his opportunity, the marquis gave a terrible lunge, which drove his sword right through the unfortunate officer's body. The unhappy man reeled back on the grass. The doctor placed his hand upon his heart and found it had already ceased to beat.

The dead man's seconds, overcome with grief, grasped his hand for the last time; they were both friends of his of long standing. One of them, kneeling down, was about to close the vacant eyes, when Lignano touched him on the shoulder, and repeated in his ear the sinister words:

"Monsieur, will you jump?"

The latter looked for a moment at the marquis, and, without replying, seized the sword upon which the corpse of his friend had fallen, and at once placed himself in position. At the end of some seconds, during which the officer had shown much useless resolution, he received a sword thrust in the breast, and rolled expiring on the ground. He had, however, a few minutes yet to live.

The doctor quitted the dead man to hasten to the wounded one, and called the other second to his assistance, but Lignano, now grown infuriated, threw himself in the unhappy man's way, and was about to repeat his offensive proposal for the third time. He was, however, saved the trouble.

"I understand you," calmly observed the officer, seizing his comrade's sword, and placing himself face to face with the terrible marquis. Some seconds later he sank down in his blood.

Only the doctor now remained. Would any human being credit it, the bloodstained bully, brutal as he naturally was, was rendered positively fiendlike by the intoxication of the slaughter which he had already perpetrated, and longed for more blood to shed? Addressing himself to the doctor in a tone of command, he required him to jump over the switch.

The doctor did not hestitate. He did what most other men would have done in his place. He jumped over the switch, and by so doing was able to continue his attentions to two wounded men, and to save the life of one of them.

The intimacy which existed between the Marquis de Lignano and Lucien Claveau, instead of growing weaker after the last sanguinary freak seemed to constitute itself on an entirely new basis, and to assume the proportions of a sincere and lasting friendship, if one may dare thus to degrade the term. They were always to be seen together, rivetted as it were to the factitious attachment which they professed to feel for each other, like a couple of galley slaves united by the same chains. At last they took to inhabiting the same suite of rooms, as though each wanted to have the other constantly in reach. It would be difficult to explain friendship between two men so utterly opposed to each other on the score of birth, education, and manners, for the Marquis de Lignano, spite of his misdeeds, had always kept up the outward appearance of a man born and brought up in good society, whereas Lucien Claveau was of obscure origin, brusque in manners, and deficient in education. His handsome face and muscular figure were, moreover, strikingly in contrast with the marquis's repulsive features and feeble frame. We have mentioned that the pair lived together in the same suite of apartments, but omitted to state that they occupied the same sleeping room, in which each had, of course, his separate bed.

One summer's morning, long after the hour at which the two friends usually quitted their bedroom, the man-servant who waited upon them both, hearing nothing whatever of either of his masters, began to feel rather uneasy. His orders were never to disturb them, but always to wait until he was summoned. Accustomed to their irregular mode of life, he was not in the habit of sitting up for them of an evening, still he always knew, on entering the sitting-room the next day, either by some directions written in pencil, or by some clothes being placed there for him to brush, whether or not the two friends were at home. Now on that morning he had found, according to custom, a short pencilled note which proved that the pair had returned overnight. How then was the continued silence in their bedroom to be accounted for? Like a good and faithful servant he had of course applied his ear to the door, and his eye to the keyhole, and had moreover turned the handle, and found the door to be locked on the inside. As the day advanced he grew alarmed, and proceeded to force the door. Entering the room on tiptoe, he felt somewhat reassured when on leaning over each bed he saw by the dim light which penetrated through the closed shutters, that his masters were to all appearance peacefully sleeping. He was about to retire as he had entered, with the greatest caution, when his foot struck against something, that gave forth a ringing sound as it rolled along the floor. He had evidently kicked against a sword.

A frightful suspicion crossed the valet's mind. Without losing a moment he groped his way to the window, threw open the shutters, and saw at a glance that the room was in a frightful state of disorder. Clothes were strewn about, furniture was overturned, candlesticks, vases, and various knick-knacks scattered over the floor, while by the side of each bed was a sword, the bloody stains on which too clearly indicated that a desperate encounter, a horrible and deadly struggle, had taken place between these men, who, as if in bitter derision of their miserable destiny, reposed side by side like two brothers under the same roof.

At the sight of all this havoc the valet uttered a terrified cry, on hearing which the marquis and Lucien, both of whom had appeared dead, rose up, at the same instant, in their beds. Both were ghastly pale; their bloodstained shirts were torn to rags; their chests punctured with wounds; the right arm of one was dreadfully hacked, while the neck of the other showed a series of gashes sickening to contemplate. Spite, however, of all the pain they were enduring, spite, too, of their weakness, and of the burning fever which consumed them, they preserved their sitting posture, glaring at each other out of their glassy-looking eyes, enfeebled it is true, but still not vanquished. So long as they had sufficient strength left them to injure, they would continue to defy each other with proud disdain.

They remained thus for several seconds. Suddenly Lucien Claveau, overcome by some painful impression, fell heavily back and gave

vent to a loud sob. At this cry of despair the marquis bounded on his bed, as though he had been shot; a shrill sinister laugh escaped from his thin ghost-like lips. "Oh, you are crying, are you?" said he in a firm voice; "then you confess yourself vanquished, and I can now pronounce you to be a coward."

At the word "coward" it was Lucien's turn to spring up, and the valet, sole witness of this frightful scene, had to keep him from throwing himself upon the marquis. "I, a coward!" cried Claveau, held firmly back by the servant, "a coward! Ah, I have committed my share of crimes, been guilty of countless follies, have possibly rendered many persons unhappy, but never has a living soul been entitled to say that Lucien Claveau was a coward, and feared to face danger, even though death might be the result. You, marquis, are a far greater villain than I am, for you are incapable of repentance and impotent for good. A moment ago when I was looking at you, covered with wounds, I forgot my own sufferings, of which you are the cause, and I forgave you, and felt a real pity for you, which found vent in the first tears I have shed for many years. And yet you laugh at me, and taunt me, and still dare to laugh at all I am saying. You are incapable of understanding a heart that can repent and forgive. Well, know that I again hate and despise you. You have styled me a coward, wounded as we both are, we have neither of us strength sufficient to hold a sword, still both of us ought not to remain alive. We are only a few paces distant from each other. Have you sufficient strength to hold a pistol?"

The marquis made a movement and replied, "Ah, I understand you, a duel with pistols, and then we shall have done with each other. Joseph," said he, addressing the servant, who was pale with fright, "take those two pistols on the mantelpiece, load them before our eyes, and hand one to each of us, then give the signal; or, better still," said he, turning with evident pain towards his adversary, "let us draw lots who shall blow the other's brains out.'

"So be it," answered Claveau. "Joseph, you have heard what has passed, load one of the pistols."

Joseph made a pretence of going out to execute the orders which he had received. No sooner, however, did he find himself on the other side of the bedroom door than he quietly locked it, and ran off to a doctor, into whose hands Lucien and the marquis were compelled to resign themselves. Their cases required perfect quiet.

Lucien was conveyed by his friends to the house of a distant relative, a widow lady, with several children. Assisted by her eldest daughter, a kind, simple, country girl, she attended him with so much care, that Claveau recovered.

His heart was touched, he spoke of marriage, promising a thorough reformation of his former course of life; and he did marry. To enable him to withdraw himself completely from all association with his old companions, it was decided that he and his young wife should leave Bordeaux, if only for a time. But just before they left, chance brought them, in spite of all precautions, face to face with the Marquis de Lignano, who accosted Lucien, saying,

"I had heard that you were convalescent; but have always maintained the contrary, because, coward as I have pronounced you to be, I did not believe you coward enough to hide yourself behind a petticoat."

Lucien merely replying "Never mind," passed on.

The marquis followed, and again hissed his taunt into Lucien's ear.

The excitement consequent upon this meeting kept Lucien's wife awake that night, and next day she was too ill to leave her room. Her husband sat moodily by her bedside until the afternoon, when, finding that she had dozed off to sleep, he determined to go to Bordeaux and exact revenge. Chafing with anger he hastened to the café, which Lignano was in the habit of frequenting, rushed up the stairs, and disregarding the salutations of several of his old acquaintances who advanced to greet him after his long absence, made straight for the table at which his enemy was seated. The marquis immediately rose.

"Well, here I am," said Lucien, savagely, and hardly able to restrain himself from clutching Lignano by the throat.

"Pshaw!" said the marquis, contemptuously. "Go back to your petticoat; you are too great a coward for my notice."

Lucien seized him by the coat collar with one hand and by the skirts with the other, carried him to the open window, and held him over the balcony, then said coldly to him, "If you do not ask my pardon, and withdraw your words I shall let you drop."

The marquis, in the grip of an adversary whom he knew to be thoroughly unrelenting, had nevertheless the audacity, or it may be the courage, to reply.

"If you are simply acting, and do not intend to let me drop, you are a coward."

At that moment an old servant of Lucien's, who had made his way on to the balcony, whispered something into his master's ear, whereupon Lucien instantly carried the marquis back into the apartment and released his hold of him. Hardly was the marquis upon his feet again before he sprang towards Lucien, and dealt him a sharp blow in the face. To the surprise of those present, Lucien Claveau offered no kind of response to this new insult, and the marquis retired, saying, "To-morrow, wherever you please."

Madame Claveau, on awaking after her husband's departure, had been seized with fainting fits, and was become delirious. Claveau held a brief conversation with a couple of acquaintances, and then quitting the café in company with the old man who had been sent to look for him, drove with all speed home. In little

more than half an hour he was at his wife's bedside; calmed by the sight of him, she slept. When she woke up in the middle of the night Claveau was still watching over her. After conversing affectionately with him for upwards of an hour, she gradually dozed off again, and Claveau, so soon as she was sound asleep, stealthily left the house, and proceeded on foot to Bordeaux to a rendezvous, which he had arranged with two of his friends at the café, on the preceding afternoon.

He was first at the appointed spot, but had not long to wait, for his two seconds shortly afterwards arrived, and, following close upon them, came the marquis, accompanied by his seconds.

During several minutes these two men fought with considerable ardour; they developed all their more cunning tricks, and each endeavoured, in accordance with the approved rules of fence, neatly to spit the other upon his sword's point. While the engagement was thus proceeding Lucien still pressing his adversary closely, said to him, "You gave me a blow yesterday with your fist; as yet I have not deigned to return it, but I intend doing so before I send you, as I shortly shall, to your last home." The pair were still in close conflict with each other, when Lucien rapidly passed his sword under his left arm, and, at the same moment, dealt the marquis a violent blow in the face. Then, regaining hold of his weapon, he assumed a defensive position before Lignano had time to recover himself, for the blow he had received had sent him reeling to the ground. This daring feat, the most audacious, perhaps, that has ever occurred in a duel, astounded the seconds. The marquis was beside himself, and, in a fit of rage, sprang with raised sword upon Lucien Claveau, who calmly and confidently awaited his onslaught.

"Monsieur le marquis," said he, "we are now quits."

The marquis renewed his attacks again and again, but always to find himself foiled. Presently, by a rapid movement, Lucien disarmed the marquis, then, thrusting his own sword downwards, pinned him by his right foot to the ground. After a few seconds Lucien drew his sword out and handed the marquis his own weapon.

The seconds came forward; Lignano made vain efforts to continue standing upon both feet. "It is useless," said the seconds to him, "it is quite impossible that you can go on." Glaring at his adversary with a savage expression, he said to him, "It is not over yet. I have still the chance of putting a bullet through your head."

The pistols were loaded. The impetuous marquis, regardless of the pain he was enduring, hobbled along until he arrived at the point where he was compelled to halt; he was then ten paces distant from Claveau, who had not advanced a single step, and who remained immovable while he received the marquis's fire.

"It is now my turn," said he, and advancing five paces towards the marquis, he deliberately took aim at him.

"Claveau," exclaimed one of the seconds, "this will never do; it is nothing less than murder."

Lucien turned round and faced him. "Look here," said he, pointing to a hole in his shirt at the shoulder, from which drops of blood were oozing, showing that his opponent's ball had taken effect. The next moment he fired, and the marquis fell with his face to the ground. When they raised him he was dead; the ball had pierced his forehead and entered the brain.

Lucien, after having had his wound dressed (it was but a graze) hastened back to his wife's bedside to find that, alarmed anew at his second absence, she had relapsed. At night she was in the utmost danger. Next morning, while Claveau had gone to steal a few minutes' rest in an adjacent chamber, a commissary of police, arrived at the house to arrest him on information furnished by one of the marquis's seconds. This new shock killed his wife. Lucien, in the bitterness of his grief, threw himself upon her lifeless form, and was only removed from it with difficulty. Then, assuming an air of calmness, he said he was ready, and the next moment, as if by some sudden thought, seized one of a pair of pistols which were always kept loaded, on the top of a small cabinet, and placing it to his ear, disposed with his own hand of the last of the Bordeaux duellists.

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MESSRS. CHAPPELL and Co. have the honour to announce that Mr. Dickens will read as follows: Saturday, October 31, Manchester; Monday, November 2, Brighton; Tuesday, November 3, St. James's Hall, London; Saturday Morning, November 7, Brighton; Tuesday, November 17, St. James's Hall, London; Tuesday, December 1, St. James's Hall, London; Monday, December 7, Thursday, December 10, Friday, December 11, Monday, December 14, and Saturday Morning, December 19, Edinburgh; Wednesday, December 9, Tuesday, December 15, Wednesday, December 16, and Thursday, December 17, Glasgow.

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HESTER'S HISTORY.

A New Serial Tale.

CHAPTER XX. HESTER IS PUZZLED.

It may be that Lady Helen Munro has appeared—in the few short glimpses of her character revealed within the limits of this hurried tale—as a person of a character quite weak, and utterly without any will of her own. I am glad to have an opportunity of showing how mistaken was the latter idea. Weak she was; but then people of a weak mind are often known to be possessed of a strong will, especially where the concerns of other people are in question.

No sooner did her ladyship hear her son state in plain terms his determination never to marry the lady whom she had selected for his wife, than she immediately resolved that the wedding should take place with as little delay as was possible under existing circumstances. So long as he had remained quietly idle in the matter, delaying to begin his suit, she had been quite content with his humour, had seen no cause for haste. But when he declared himself anxious to put an honest straightforward finish to that very unsatisfactory sham which had been called his engagement, she at once became afflicted and insulted, and found that herself and dearest Janet had been extremely badly used.

"There need be no regret about it," Sir Archie said. "I am quite convinced that Miss Golden feels as I do. It will be pleasanter for all when the restraint of this mock engagement is removed. You will find that she will be pleased when you give her her release. You will know how to manage. It would be quite out of place for me to interfere in the matter."

"You know, Archie, I make every excuse for you," sobbed Lady Helen. "I feel very much being talked to by you in this meaningless manner, but I know how your poor head is turned about the rebels. If I believed what you say, as I did at the first shock, I should consider myself deeply insulted and dear Janet horribly wronged. But I do not believe you, dear Archie; I would not behave so wickedly towards you as to believe you. And my best advice to you is not to believe yourself. By-and-by you will be less worried, and your senses will come back. I will promise you to forget every word you have said."

"I have thought well over every word," said Sir Archie, "and I shall never at any time withdraw so much as one. I beg, mother, that you will understand me once for all, and do your best to set this matter to rights. I shall depend on you to do so."

And Sir Archie walked out of the room.

But none the more was Lady Helen convinced that this marriage which she had planned should not take place.

"It is all nonsense," she said to Mrs. Hazeldean; "he cannot mean to live single all his life, and he never made much objection to dear Janet before. I don't believe he knows the difference between one woman and another. And as for letting such a splendid fortune slip through one's fingers, never to speak of the sweet girl herself, it is quite out of the question to think of it. Oh, I quite rely upon dear Archie's coming to his senses by the time these shocking rebels have been all hanged. And in the mean time if we could get him quietly married, and carried off to France, or Italy, or some other nice place where the people have no wrongs, nor miseries, nor anything unpleasant of that kind, and one need not be afraid to go to sleep in one's bed! A vessel could take us from the bay just at hand, and we need not run the risk of being shot at as rebels on the road, or taken out of our coach and hanged to a wayside tree. I shall certainly lay my mind to it. And as for speaking to dear Janet, I shall do no such thing; except to consult her about getting her trousseau put in hand. Once that has been got ready, you know, Margaret, no man with a spark of feeling could draw back."

"You had better not thwart Archie," said Mrs. Hazeldean. "Take my word for it he means what he says. And as for getting ready a trousseau under the circumstances—if you want to make yourself and the young lady feel very foolish, I think you had better do it. I believe you will be wise to act according to Archie's desire."

But Lady Helen here put her handkerchief to her eyes. And when Lady Helen put her handkerchief to her eyes eloquence were mere waste and reasoning foolishness. That very evening she opened her mind to Hester on the subject of Miss Golden's trousseau. And

having done so she felt more at ease, so much so, indeed, that she was enabled afterwards to tell Hester that she believed she might not begin the sewing for the wedding until the Christmas time should be over. She was planning some charades, some tableaux, some little gaieties, as an excuse to bring friends about, to make the evenings less dull than they had been. And Lady Helen had used a moderate word, when she called her evenings dull. She had a periodical attack of nightmare, coming on whenever dusk began to fall. She got on pretty well with her mornings, when she could state her opinions privately to every one who came near her, that dear Archie was over-anxious, could ransack her wardrobes, and plan masquerading costumes; but in the evenings she sat shrunk up in a corner of her sofa, starting convulsively when poor Pat opened the door never so softly, and thinking that every shriek of the rising wind was the howling of rebels getting punished. And thus it had come to pass through her terror that Hester received her orders of an evening, sitting face to face with her ladyship, on one of her ladyship's embroidered drawing-room chairs. For Lady Helen's nervousness had a passion for gathering as many faces as possible round her couch. And if the faces could be found young and hopeful, as well as beautiful to look upon, they were by so much the more grateful to her ladyship's fearful eyes.

Miss Madge had begun another purse for Archie, and she knotted and knotted, and grew more silent and mysterious. Purses do wear out in the course of years, especially those of rich people, I suppose, who keep them pretty well filled. At all events, it is good to be provided against emergencies. The last had been red, but this was a green one, the sight of which colour amongst her fingers seemed to afford the Honourable Madge a most exquisite satisfaction. Not so Lady Helen. "Put that green thing away, Madge," she would whimper. "It is enough to compromise the whole family. As for you, I don't believe you would have the slightest objection to be hanged any minute. But I think you might consider other people!"

Miss Golden sang, and made other music with her fingers, upon spinnet and guitar, with a kindly enough pity for the lady's nervous state. And every evening her voice grew louder and more defiant to all fears and dangers. Yet had certainly the roses left her cheeks.

Miss Janet had reported very truly of Sir Archie, when she stated that he made efforts to divert his lady mother. And he was wonderfully patient, for a man, with her long dissertations to Hester on the subject of the fashions, both of these and former days. And he even went so far, on one occasion, as to recommend for her perusal—he seated at her right hand, and Hester at her left—a certain book of ancient costumes which he had picked up somewhere as a curiosity of literature. And Lady Helen remembered this the next morning, when in high consultation with Miss Madge, Miss Golden, and Hester, on the subject of stage properties, in Hester's tower room. And she bade Hester run to the library and fetch the said book of costumes.

Hester hesitated. "Sir Archie Munro may be in the library, your ladyship," she said.

"If he is, he will not eat you, child!" said Lady Helen. "Tell him I want the book he spoke of last evening."

So Hester went, lingered on the stairs, in the hall; but meeting a servant, and not wishing to be seen hanging about, as if she had been afraid of something, was obliged to walk boldly into the room.

Sir Archie was there, as Hester had feared he might be, and he seemed more than glad to see her, as Hester had feared he might seem. He found her the book, and held it out for her to take. And as he so held it out he looked at her face, with a grave, earnest, and a long look; never thinking to be rude indeed—not his worst enemy could say that from such a look—but rather as if he were trying to read his future, of good or evil, of weal or woe—this being no time for speech—under eyelids that would not raise themselves, of a young shrinking face. But the book went from his hand, and Hester made quick steps towards the door.

"I beg you to wait a moment," said Sir Archie.

He did not want her to go just yet, but he was at a loss to know what to say that could keep her. He knew that he wanted to love her and to tell her that he loved her, but the time not being ripe he found it difficult to fill up the interval when such moments as the present arrived. There was that about her presence which hushed, while it attracted and made him glad, which left him little of his love in his bearing, save its dignity. But Hester had stopped and was waiting quietly. She was so resolved not to be foolish again, to take everything that might come as quite meant in good faith, to accept it as a matter of course.

Sir Archie had some mediæval tastes, and he knew a holy face when he saw it in a picture, or out of a picture; and it impressed him. And as Hester stood a little off, with her yellow head shining against the brown wainscot, he remembered a painting in a dusky cloister of a very old monastery he had visited long ago. It was an angel with a golden censer, personifying prayer.

The memory brought with it a suggestion; and Sir Archie's next speech may not seem apt for the occasion.

"I am in danger and difficulty," he said; "I would ask you to pray for me."

"Yes," said Hester, readily, and with relief. She had feared he had been going to say—she knew not what.

But the ready, bright, relieved face, was too much for Sir Archie's prudence.

"Do so," he said with a glow in his eyes of the real true love that was in him, "and I shall owe you a deep debt of gratitude. And if I live through these times it will be the business of

my life to show it, by making you happy—if you will let me——"

Sir Archie had not intended to say so much. He stopped undecided whether it were generous at this moment to go on. But already Hester's courage was not proof against so much as had been said. This was not the first time that Sir Archie had so frightened her. She retreated to the door, her eyes fixed as if fascinated on a button of Sir Archie's coat. Her fingers felt the handle of the door. She dropped a hurried curtsey, and disappeared.

"Why are your cheeks so scarlet, child?" asked Lady Helen, somewhat sharply, as Hester gave her the book, in the tower room.

"Dear me, Helen!" said Miss Madge, "you must expect that young things will run themselves out of breath upon a staircase. When I was a young thing I broke both my legs twice with taking flying leaps down-stairs."

Lady Helen shrugged her shoulders. "My good Madge," she said, "you were always an exceptional creature. I hope Miss Cashel does not take flying leaps down-stairs."

"No, indeed!" said Hester, so earnestly that her ladyship laughed; which was a good omen for the day. And the business of the properties went on.

"I shall perform in this!" cried Miss Janet, picking out a gown from a heap of strange garments. "What a dainty piece of finery! I shall play princess of the rebels, Queen of Ireland in my own right. I shall order the King of England to be brought before me in chains. And I shall put my foot upon his neck!"

Miss Janet threw herself into an attitude of mock defiance, holding the dress outspread before her. Lady Helen shrieked, and sank into a seat. The dress was a stiff white silk, richly wrought and ornamented with shamrocks in green, and with a green velvet train.

"Put it away!" cried Lady Helen. "Ah, my dear Janet! let it be torn up and burned! I wore it when the United Irish Society was in favour. What greens and what shamrocks were worn in those days! Let it be torn up and burned, every shred of it, lest it cost us our lives!"

"Poor gown!" said Miss Janet, coolly; "and I vow it is a brave gown. Ah, I pray you, Lady Helen, invite the king to dinner. I will dine at his very elbow in this gown. And if his majesty should make a remark I shall modestly call his attention to the trees outside the window. And I shall say, 'I wonder your majesty does not indict the arch-rogue Nature for high treason!'"

But Lady Helen had fainted by this time. And in a scramble for smelling-bottles the morning's work came to an end.

"I am in danger and difficulty.—The business of my life shall be to make you happy, if you will let me." Hester sewed all her seams on the wrong side of her cloth, and stitched a sleeve of one colour into a bodice of another. It was not to be expected that her poor head should be very clear this afternoon. Nevertheless, though Lady Helen had given orders for some harlequin costumes, it was also not to be expected that she should be satisfied unless some little method might appear to have been employed in their contrivance. So Hester was obliged to give up her work for the hour.

She put on her cloak and went down the glen. It was close upon Christmas now, and the frost crackled under her feet as she crossed the old drawbridge over the dried-up moat. The falls were bound up, and the air was quite still. Grey furrows seamed the face of the heavens. Sullen clouds, that looked as if bursting with a secret evil portent, leaned their rough edges on the frowning hills, and looked down the sad valleys, as if expecting something. The cottage doors were shut, partly from cold, and partly from fear, and here and there a face, anxious or grieved, looked out from a window to see who was going past.

Hester walked for an hour, as fast as her flying feet could carry her, through the bye-ways of the hills, till she came in sight of the village; and then she sat down to draw breath. The openings of many glens lay under her eyes. She could follow their windings and foldings among the mountains, as they travelled on and up towards the skies, wrapping them with purple and amber, into their secret sombre resting places. But Hester's face was towards the village, and her eyes were on the chimneys of one house.

"I will go to her," said Hester, "and I will ask her what it means. I will tell her every word, if I were to die of shame the next minute!"

And so off Hester started again, nor paused till she stood in Mrs. Hazeldean's parlour.

Mrs. Hazeldean was sitting sewing by her fireside. A basket of bright flannels was at her feet, and a garment made of the same was on her knee. The sweet grave face looked as busy with thought as her fingers were busy with the needle. But there were no restless cares nor nervous fears behind that face. No solitude ever banished the tender look of lurking joy from those eyes and lips, nor yet the broad look of satisfied trust in a strength unutterable that had not failed, nor could fail, to furnish nerve for her right hand, and courage for her heart. No sad days could shadow that brow, but with a passing cloud. For the light that shone upon it was a reflex from a sun that knows no setting.

Mrs. Hazeldean was glad, surprised, to see Hester come in; not quite satisfied with her face. She thought the girl looked a little wild and feverish. Had she walked too fast? Was she cold, or hot? Why had she thought of coming so far on such a day, or at least why had she not come earlier? There would hardly be time for her to get home before dusk. Mrs. Hazeldean had removed Hester's hat, and smoothed back with two fond hands the fair locks a little blown astray by the mountain air; and she had pulled off her gloves, and was

chafing some chilled fingers between her own warm palms.

All this was very trying for Hester. If the fever of her suspense had not made her almost reckless, her resolution must have melted into nothing at such treatment. But the thought of the flying moments pressed her hard; and the dread of returning to her work, it might be to a solitary room, with the burthen of that secret and that wonder still upon her, lent her tongue a desperation that did the part of real courage.

"I must not stay five minutes, Mrs. Hazeldean," said Hester, trying to answer two questions at once. "And I should not have come out on such a day if I had not been driven out."

"My darling!" said Mrs. Hazeldean, alarmed; "who has driven you out?"

"No person," said Hester. "Nothing except my own distress of mind."

She had got her hands disentangled from among her friend's soft fingers by this time, and she had tied on her hat and stood ready for flight. She knew that she was running a terrible risk in speaking the words that were waiting on her tongue. She might be misunderstood; nothing else seemed so natural to expect as that she should. She might offend, disgust, the friend who had cherished her. So she stood ready to fly from before this face that she loved, if it so happened that dear face should grow dark at her audacity.

"Distress of mind!" said Mrs. Hazeldean; and as she spoke she guessed even more than was the truth.

"I came here, Mrs. Hazeldean," said Hester, "to ask you if you know what Sir Archie means?"

Mrs. Hazeldean's eyes were on Hester's face, and saw the face turn white with the effort that had been made. Why had Archie been so foolish? Mrs. Hazeldean's two hands went suddenly forth, laid hold of the figure that stood so aloof, ready for flight, and pulled it down without ceremony against her knee.

"I cannot know what he has been doing," she said, "but I venture to say that he means to do well."

"Mrs. Hazeldean!" said Hester, "I must say something more. He—behaves strangely to me. I dare not understand him. I came to tell you this, though I thought that the telling might have killed me."

"Hester," said Mrs. Hazeldean, after one minute's pause, "I have not got any liberty to interfere with Sir Archie's secrets, but I will say so much as this—I have known him all my life, and I believe that you may trust him."

Hester's face sank in her lap, and remained there as if the girl had been annihilated. But a few moments went by, and Hester's wits were alive again.

"But, Mrs. Hazeldean," she began again, desperately.

But Mrs. Hazeldean stopped her mouth with a kiss. "I will not hear a word more," she said, "You shall not distress yourself with another syllable." And she was thinking what was to be done about Hester. She must take her from the castle, and get her under her own wing. "But I am glad you came here, to-day, and I am glad you spoke to me." She went on: "So do not begin to fret lest you were wrong. Now, you shall not go back this evening. I will send them a message."

But Hester was on her feet.

"No, no, I am going," she said; and without waiting to be staid, took her burning face out of the house, and up the glen on the track to the castle.

For Hester was not satisfied. She had not, after all her hardy efforts, had the daring to say, "But I have got orders concerning Miss Golden's wedding trousseau." She must have blundered very sadly in her speaking to Mrs. Hazeldean; or Mrs. Hazeldean must have made a great mistake. Why, it was only this very morning that Lady Helen had consulted her about the fashioning of a splendid bridal dress. So Hester had told her secret; and gained an extra heartache in exchange.

CHAPTER XXI. THE FRENCH ARE IN THE BAY.

Sewing is a kind of occupation for the hands which leaves the brain very free to think. More so almost than any other sort of work. Spinning make a noise, and writing engages the mind, more or less. Sewing is silent, monotonous, mechanical; once a device has been shaped by the scissors, and the fingers know the tricks of the device.

Sewing is a sort of secret handwriting, peculiar to women. Many a strange history, many a life's poem, has been traced in thread by the needle, hemmed into sheets, darned into stockings to be trodden under a thankless foot, stiched into wreathings of flowers and garlands. Every day these records are written, but never read. Characters marked in invisible ink will lie hidden in blank parchment, unsuspected, for years, and at last the breath of fire, like the touch of a wizard, will call them to light, and deliver their message. But no sage will ever translate the histories traced by the needle, of patience, of heroism, of passion, and anguish. How they are written and stored, these poems! Every household has its stores of such family archives. In the linen chests they lie; on the shelves of deep presses; in the drawers strewn with lavender. In the wardrobe hung with dresses, in the cupboard with mended hose; in the locked drawer where the little trousseau is arranged, smooth and orderly, of the baby who died; in the trunks, packed between laughing and crying, of the bride who will shortly go forth. If a light were suddenly given to read these hidden writings, what wild revelations, what beautiful lessons, what outpourings of joy, what majestic examples of endurance would not startle the world, and make it blush for the affectations it treasures in staring print!

Hester was making some little frills, and

every stitch in them was aware that she had got into a scrape. They all knew exceedingly well that she had been thinking far too much about Sir Archie, and what he could mean, and what he could not mean; that she had followed a rash impulse and out-stepped all maidenly dignity in speaking of Sir Archie to his aunt; although Mrs. Hazeldean had been too noble to show displeasure at her conduct, to do anything but make an effort to soothe her. Though Mrs. Hazeldean had even gone too far in the effort, saying something most strange and startling, the meaning of which Hester in her confusion had not taken hold of; for it was not to be admitted for one moment that some words which fast clung to Hester's memory could endure to bear the construction which a daring mind might put upon them.

So when the frills got far too wise, Hester bundled them away, and sat brooding over her fire like a second Cinderella, not unhappy because she could not go to a ball, but because her poor little lonely heart was sore, with an aching and a burning to which all her former troubles looked as mere flying shadows, as the fretting of a babe for broken toys.

And this brooding over the fire would not do. Hester had sense enough to take out her desk, and to task herself to the writing of some letters.

A letter to Lady Humphrey, and a letter to the Mother Augustine, and lastly one other, which ought to have been written long ago, a letter to Mr. Pierce in which his ring was to be enclosed. So a little note was penned, hoping that Mr. Humphrey would excuse the regretful writer, who had found herself unable to fulfil his wishes about the ring. And when the letters had been folded and addressed Hester went into her bedroom for some wax which she had bought. And she left that foolish ring upon her desk among the papers.

Meantime the letters by evening post had arrived in the castle drawing-room. Miss Golden had had her share, had read, and had not been pleased. She was always looking out for some writing in one particular hand; and as this never appeared, it is not likely that her letters should make her glad. Lady Helen was asleep upon her sofa, so her letters had been laid beside her, at her hand. Miss Madge had read a letter from her good friend M., who had helped her to make that memorable pasty. Miss Madge was somewhat flushed, Miss Madge was quite elated. Miss Madge began to hum in a low voice to herself:

> The French are in the bay!
> Says the Shan van Vocht.
> The French are in the bay!
> Says the Shan van Vocht.
> The French are in the bay!——

"What's that you are saying about the French, Madge?" asked Lady Helen, wakening. "I wish you would not talk about them, bloodthirsty wretches!" And Lady Helen began to break the seals of her letters.

A scream followed the reading of the first, just as the drawing-room door opened, and Sir Archie came in.

"Archie! Archie!" cried her ladyship, "is this true, what they have written me? There is a rumour that a fleet of war-ships has left France, and that it is coming to the assistance of the rebels."

"I have heard it," said Sir Archie, "and I think it likely to be true. But you need not be uneasy, mother, they are not going to storm you in your drawing-room."

Sir Archie looked pale, yet cheerful. But Lady Helen was carried to her bed. And Miss Madge was in haste to reply to the letter of her friend M.; and she went humming her snatch of song up the stairs to her tower-room, where she locked herself in, with pen and ink, for the night.

Miss Golden felt herself lonely and ill-treated. There was no chance of peace and a little gaiety to be had in this miserable country. The troubles were getting thicker in it every day that shone. And here was she, miles and miles away from the only friend she cared about, all for a foolish quarrel of her making, which ought to have been cleared up long ago. And now he was not thinking of her, would leave her here to her fate. Oh, Pierce! Pierce! would that she were at home in England, near him!

Miss Janet was getting nervous when she indulged such thoughts as these, for she was not given to heaping reproaches upon her own so wilful head. And in such a desponding frame of mind she walked into Hester's room.

Hester was not there. Hester was in her bedroom. Miss Janet stood at the fire, and then Miss Janet walked to the table. On the table she saw letters, and one of them addressed to Mr. Pierce Humphrey, captain in his majesty's —— regiment. And she also saw a ring which she knew to be her own, at least a ring which had once been her own; and it was fastened to a ribbon which had been worn round the neck. And the sight made her sick of the letter and of the ring.

The sight made her sick, because she was not in her usual frame of mind. If she had been like her ordinary self she would have called in a loud voice for Miss Hester to come forth out of her bedroom; and she would probably have with difficulty, if at all, restrained herself from boxing both the ears of that young woman, and pinching both her pale dainty cheeks. But there was a lump in Janet's throat, and a genuine unwonted throe of anguish and remorse tightening her heart. She crept away to her room in the humiliation of tears, and she certainly hated Hester—the sly thing—from that night.

But the next day she was not so sickly and sentimental. She took occasion to instal herself for an hour in Hester's room, and she sat staring at the girl and putting questions to her.

"Do you know people in London called Humphrey?" asked Miss Golden.

"Yes," answered Hester, with a sudden vivid blush.

"What a soft silly fool the girl is!" thought Miss Golden. But Hester was only blushing because she was getting forced to disobey the Mother Augustine.

"People?" asked Miss Janet again, sharply.

"Yes, people," answered Hester.

"You know Lady Humphrey, of Hampton Court?"

"I know her," said Hester."

"And you also know her son, Mr. Pierce?" continued Janet.

"I know him also."

"Very probably Lady Humphrey was the friend of whom you told me once before?"

"Lady Humphrey was the friend."

"Humph!" said Miss Golden; and then added, with a sudden bitter change in her voice, "Has Lady Helen yet consulted you on the subject of a bridal trousseau?"

"Yes," answered Hester.

"See that you are industrious, then!" said Miss Janet, superciliously, and went, singing a sprightly catch, out of the room.

"The little ambitious monkey!" cried Miss Janet, in her chamber. "Must send a poor soldier back his ring because a fine estated baronet should admire her yellow hair! Miss Innocence! you have robbed me of my lover. Then I shall take especial care that you shall never find yourself mistress of Glenluce."

So Miss Janet could be rather coarse in her threats and suspicions when she was angry.

But Hester put down her sewing for a few moments while she reflected on the confession which she had been led into making. She might as well have told Miss Golden all the tale of Pierce's ring. Well, it could not matter now. The ring had been returned with her explanation. Mr. Pierce could manage best his own affairs, without a doubt. And it were silly and very awkward, such a tale, at such a time, when the wedding robes were ordered, and the bridegroom was Sir Archie Munro.

"My dear," said Miss Madge, "what is this story that Miss Golden has been telling me? A secret connexion with Lady Humphrey! Secret I must say, since you never said a word of it. And the name of Lady Humphrey is a horror in this house. A horror to Lady Helen. My dear, Lady Helen is in a panic!"

"Lady Helen is often in a panic, Miss Madge," said Hester.

"My dear, don't grow pert. I never knew you pert. Miss Golden is pert, very. My dear, Lady Helen has some reason to be alarmed. A secret connexion with Lady Humphrey!"

"Not secret, Miss Madge. Mrs. Hazeldean has known of it!" said Hester, stoutly.

"Margaret. Ah! that is not so bad. Well, my dear, I wonder at Margaret. But you, perhaps, have never known any evil of Lady Humphrey?"

"No, Miss Madge," said Hester.

"Hist, then, my dear! and I will tell you what they say of her."

THE LAND OF EARTHQUAKES.

The Spaniards, in South America, were not without early intimation of the insecurity of the soil. Lima was founded in 1535, under the high-sounding title of Ciudad de los Reyes, or City of the Kings, since altered to its present name. In 1582, Lima had its first recorded attack of earthquake. The centre of the shock, however, was lower down along the coast, in the neighbourhood of Arequipa, founded by Pizarro some twelve months after the establishment of Lima. Arequipa was laid in ruins then, as now; but Lima escaped with a warning. Lima's turn, however, was not long in coming. Four years afterwards, it was laid prostrate; and so great was the catastrophe, even in that land of catastrophes, that the anniversary of that destruction is solemnly commemorated, to the present time, on the day of the Visitation of Elizabeth. Lima had its third attack in 1609. In November, 1630, there was another earthquake; but so many of the citizens contrived to escape, that they, then and there, instituted the Festival of Nuestra Señora del Melagro, which is celebrated annually to this day.

Thenceforth, earthquake and city may be truly said to have entered into contest for possession of the soil. Earthquake returned to the charge in 1655, with such violence that, for the first time, the citizens camped for several days in the country districts around. When they returned, they found no stone standing on another; nevertheless, the city rose again. After this, there was no earthquake for some twenty years. Again, ten years later, in 1687, at four o'clock in the morning, houses and public edifices came tumbling down without the least previous intimation: the inhabitants, as usual, rushing into the squares and open spaces. The miserable consolation, however, of looking on in safety was this time denied them. At six in the morning the earthquake repeated its attack with renewed vigour, and the sea, retiring and rising in a wall of inky waters—as it did in the great earthquake of this year—dashed back with overwhelming force over the land. Callao, which had arisen as the port of Lima, a few miles from it, was entirely destroyed, and most of the inhabitants were carried away by the receding waters. The local records, preserved to us by Don Antonio de Ulloa, captain of his most Christian majesty's navy, mention this as the most disastrous visitation to that date. December, 1690, September, 1697, July, 1699, February, 1716, January, 1725, December, 1732, were all earthquake months in Lima. In 1734 and 1745 there were more earthquakes. On the 28th of October, 1746, at half-past ten at night, the first shock was felt of another earthquake, and within the space of three

minutes all the buildings in the city, great and small, public and private, were heaps of ruins, burying with them those inhabitants who had not been quick enough in escaping to the squares. Then succeeded a moment's calm, as when the heavy ordnance has opened the battle, and the lighter, but more numerous, musketry prepares to follow. Soon it began again, and the houseless homeless inhabitants counted two hundred distinct shocks within the following twenty-four hours. These shocks continued until the February of the following year, and were computed at four hundred and fifty in all. On this occasion the port of Callao sank quite down below the level of the sea. Nothing was left standing, save a piece of wall belonging to the fort of Santa Cruz, on which twenty-two persons contrived to save themselves. Of the twenty-three ships then in port, nineteen were wholly sunk, and the remaining four carried a considerable distance inland. Of the four thousand inhabitants, which the port of Callao then numbered, only two hundred survived. In Lima, thirteen hundred dead bodies were excavated from the ruins, exclusive of great numbers of maimed, who afterwards died of their hurts. Commander Wilkes, of the United States exploring expedition of 1849, was able in that year to define the site of the old port of Callao beneath the sea.

So much for Lima. Let us next take the case of Caraccas, chief city of the Republic of Venezuela.

Ascension Day, 1812, rose fair and bright in that city. The air was calm—the sky unclouded: it is an error to suppose that earthquakes are usually accompanied, or preceded, by any threatening appearance of the elements. Large numbers of the inhabitants were at church, in attendance on the services of the day. Suddenly, the bells tolled without touch of mortal hand: this was the first intimation of the earthquake, which, almost simultaneously, was upon the unhappy people. The movement of the earth—as in the late widespread catastrophe—was from north to south, with transverse jerks from east to west. These cross agitations of the surface, occurring with extreme rapidity, instantly prostrated everything animate and inanimate. The inhabitants were unable to crawl to the church doors, and those vast churches, which are characteristic of all South American cities, from the largest to the smallest, descended in ruins around them. Ten thousand persons are said to have been killed in the churches alone. The churches of La Trinadad and Alta Gracia, more than one hundred and fifty feet in height, with naves supported by pillars of twelve and fifteen feet in diameter, were reduced to masses of ruin little more than a man's height. In the barracks, a regiment of soldiers had just been drawn up under arms, ready to form part of a procession that was to take place after divine service. Scarcely a man of them was left. And all this was the work of a single minute. From the first tolling of a bell to the falling of the last stone of the city of Caraccas, one minute only elapsed. Many thousand persons were maimed and wounded, for whom there was no shelter, no medicine, no food, scarcely a drop of water. There were not even implements wherewith to extricate them from the ruins which lay upon them. The survivors dug out with their fingers two thousand of their crushed fellow-citizens, who had still some life remaining in them. The shock had broken the pipes conveying water; the falling in of the earth had choked up the springs which supplied them; there were no utensils in which to carry water from the river. The wounded and sick were carried to the river's bank, and there left under such protection as the foliage afforded. The night, we are told, rose calm and serene; the round full moon shone over the sad labours of the survivors. Mothers still carried their dead children about, refusing to believe that life had entirely fled. Troops of relatives and friends sought for missing ones, up and down streets now to be traced only by long lines of ruins. A sterner duty yet remained. Twelve thousand dead bodies lay around, and decomposition, within the tropics, may be said to begin at the moment of death. There were no means of digging graves; the bodies must be burnt, and that at once. Bands of citizens were set apart for this duty. Vast piles of timber from the ruins of their homes were raised at frequent intervals; bodies of fathers, husbands, wives, children, were laid on them; and soon the whole sky was lighted with these awful flames. This lasted for several days, during which the survivors strictly devoted themselves to religious exercises. Some sang hymns; others confessed crimes of which they had never been suspected; numbers made what compensation was in their power.

Narratives as sad could be taken from Santiago (1730); Riobamba, near Quito (1797); Concepcion (1835); New Granada (1837). Caraccas soon rose from its ruins, and is now a handsome city of some fifty thousand inhabitants. As far as accounts inform us, it has escaped the catastrophe of 1868.

Up to the present time, scientific witnesses assure us that little faith is to be reposed in those appearances which superstition commonly connects with earthquakes. One scientific person indeed — for as such we must account a professor of mathematics in the University of Lima, then the most famous seat of learning on the whole of the American continent—published, in 1727, a work entitled L'Horloge Astronomique des Tremblemens de Terre, or Astronomical Dial of the Earthquakes, in which he marked out the fatal hours in which they might be apprehended. But, as we have already seen, it did not help towards the saving of his fellow-citizens during the frequent attacks to which Lima has been subjected. In truth, earthquakes occur indifferently at all hours of the twenty-four, and at all periods of the year. The circumstances and surroundings which accompany them on some occasions, are

absolutely wanting in others. The subterranean sounds (bramidos) which at ordinary periods accompany great earthquakes, cannot be said to be essentially connected with them. There may be earthquake without the peculiar rumblings, and the peculiar rumblings without earthquake. Thus, the earthquake of 4th February, 1797, which destroyed Riobamba, and which Humboldt called "one of the most fearful phenomena recorded in the physical history of our planet," was unaccompanied by any subterranean noise whatever. Again, in the elevated table-land of Guanaxuato, subterranean thunderings began about midnight of the 9th January, 1784, and continued without intermission for the space of a whole month, without any disturbing motion of the earth. The city lies among some of the richest silver mines in the world, and large quantities of silver, in bars, were stored within it. Nevertheless, the inhabitants forsook all, expecting the earthquake to be upon them every moment. But, within the city, there was no earthquake; and, at the bottom of the deepest mines, one thousand six hundred feet under ground, no shock was felt.

The earth movement appears to vary considerably. It has been already mentioned as occurring from north to south, with quick transverse jerks from east to west. But this is by no means always the case. The movement is sometimes upward, sometimes rotary. In the earthquake near Quito, already referred to, many bodies of inhabitants were thrown into the air: some being found on the hill of Cauca, several hundred feet in height, and on the opposite side of the river. A sailor in mid-ocean was violently flung into the rigging from the deck, as if a mine had exploded under the ship. In other instances, walls are observed to be twisted, although not thrown down; and rows of trees will be turned from their previous parallel direction. Stranger still is the facility with which objects on the surface of the earth have been found to shift from one place to another. The furniture of one house has been found on the ruins of a neighbour's; and, at Quito, the council of justice had, in many cases, to decide on the ownership of property, even including fields and growing crops, which had thus shifted their positions, without sustaining much apparent injury.

LEAVES FROM THE MAHOGANY TREE.

A BASKETFUL OF VEGETABLES.

A MAN cannot more thoroughly taste the enjoyment of the country and the proud possession of a rood of ground that well maintains its man, than soon after a hearty breakfast—laughter its sauce, and kindly sociability its perpetual entremet—to toss on his deer-stalker, slip on his stiff but friendly old garden gloves, snatch up the big wooden basket (this is no bull, for have we not brass shoeing-horns and English China?), and, forgetting all about the curse of Cain, fall hard at work in the garden, voluntarily incurring its penalties. Then does he beat soft green bundles of lettuces against the bottom of his spade, till the friable chocolate earth drops from the fine shallow thready roots, as he chops off part of the milky and narcotic stems; or, regardless that "all the perfumes of Araby" will not for some time sweeten his little hand, drag at the tuby stalks of onions, whose globular roots, tired of summer heat and confinement, have long since worked themselves free of the soil, and now lie rolling about outside their beds in lolling laziness, their dry red skin hanging in odorous shreds round their green-striped plump bodies, which the Egyptians of the Pyramids once worshipped as emblems of those concentric rings of stars that gird our earth. Or, perhaps, if it be earlier summer, he retires among the green lanes of melting marrowfats, and there, happy as Alcinous, whose crown was of vine tendrils, plucks the dimpled pods, tugging out the yellowing bines now and then in his zeal for the kitchen, occasionally opening a pod with a pop, and stripping off the string of soft green beads. But the man who really loves a garden will not rest satisfied with merely persuading his scarlet-skinned tapering radishes to rise earlier than they had intended, or with plucking those great woolly-podded broad beans with the black speckled flowers; but will take a manlier pleasure in driving his shining spade deep into the potato ground, and loosening the green stalks with the nightshade flowers of purple and yellow, to pick out the clear-rinded kidney-shaped tubers that judiciously applied hot water will turn to "balls of flour." Not less pleasant is the honest delve in the celery bed, down in the trenches, digging up the great reddish-white fagots of pleasant-smelling stalk and root; then hewing them into shape with the big garden knife, lopping off the lavish green plumes, and shredding away all the coarser fluted pinkish folds that envelop the savoury vegetable. And here, talking of the pleasure of lopping with a garden knife at creatures that do not feel pain, and are even the better for being wounded, let us not forget the innocent joy of cutting the first snowy cauliflower, over which the younger leaves have been aforetime bent with snapped stalks, to guard it from the dangerous admiration of the too fervid sun. How splendid the embossed flowery surface! And in the morning how the dew pearls the leaves, and runs in the sunlight into pools of melting diamond. Very pleasant, too, as lord of a garden, and therefore partner in the earth's surface, on a May morning to take one's saw-edged asparagus knife, and walk between the high rounded beds, where the sharp green spears are piercing through, and to stab down and cut them with a slant pressure, and then go over the field of battle and pick up the fallen!

Most people have experienced these tranquil delights; all people like to have them recalled in writing. Mr. Browning, in his highly original poem of "Fra Lippo Lippi," has well shown, that objects which we pass daily with in-

difference, become new and interesting when reproduced, individualised, and focussed by art; this fact is eternally true, and is one of the great secrets of the origin of the pleasure we derive from the representation of nature.

It is always pleasant, walking in a garden, to remember the native home of the flowers, and imagine them surrounded by their own scenery. It gives them a new interest and a fresh beauty. We see them growing, the dewy Auriculas, among the moss and snow of the Lower Alps; the Guernsey Lily in the Japanese meadow; the Ranunculus in the fields of Cyprus; the rich dyed Pelargonium in the rank kloof of the Caffre frontier; the flaunting Dahlia in the plains of sunny Mexico; the burnished Escholzia in the sands of hot Peru; the gay yellow bladders of the Calceolaria in the fiery forests of Chili. Think of them with these surroundings, and you will see how the flowers fit their own special countries. A Caffre beauty would twist a thick cluster of dark crimson Pelargoniums in her black oily hair. The dashing Mexican horseman, all leather and lace, would stick a huge white dahlia in the band of his enormous sombrero. A Japanese lady would pace over the bamboo-bridge with a Guernsey lily carried like a sceptre in her hand.

Just so it is with vegetables; they too have their history, their legends, and their poetry. It is not uninteresting to recal whence they came, and how they reached in slow procession their great parliament house in Covent Garden. Crusaders, merchants, pilgrims, monks, brought them to us from eastern hill, and southern plain, from northern meadow, and from western forests.

Those slow changes of the patient toiling world which slowly, very slowly, ground the sand from the solid rock, and blackened the tree ferns into coal, collected from all regions of the world the vegetables that now deck our tables. Many strange histories are wrapped up in the glossy Portugal onion, and the portly pumpkin; the cauliflower came to Italy from Cyprus, and in Elizabeth's reign spread its powdered wigs in Italian gardens, which Keats's Pot of Basil has consecrated for ever. It did not spread in England, however, much before William and Mary. The tender and agreeable broccoli came to France from Italy, about 1560 or so. The useful turnips, known to the Romans, and mentioned both by Pliny and Columella, were grown in English gardens in the sixteenth century, but not in open fields until nearly Queen Anne's reign. The Greeks knew our carrots. Scorzonera (pleasant with white sauce), a well known Moorish and Spanish antidote for snake bites, was introduced into France in 1616. The savoury shallot was brought by Greek merchants from the sandy plains of Ascalon in Palestine, where it still grows wild. Pliny and Strabo both mention it. Our good old unpresuming friend, spinach, derived its name from its native country, Hispania, thence Hispanica, Hispanage, and was used by our monks on fast days as early as 1358.

Potatoes were at first expensive luxuries, and had an evil name, as several passages in Shakespeare show. They are South American plants, that grow on the western coasts as well as on high elevations. They are supposed to have first come from the Quito hills, to Spain, early in the sixteenth century. They were then called papas. Introduced into Italy, they were called taratoufli, truffles. Thence, they spread to Vienna in 1598. Sir John Hawkins, brought them first to England from Santa Fe in 1563. But Drake and Raleigh are also claimed as introducers of "the curse of Ireland." If Raleigh introduced them, they must have come in 1586, when his ships returned from Virginia. He certainly introduced the use of the fickle and sloth feeding tuber, at his estates near Youghal, one of the Southwells first planting them. They were soon after grown in Lancashire—thrown there, some say, by a shipwreck. In 1619 potatoes sold at one shilling the pound. It is said they were not known in Flanders until 1620.

Celery, was introduced into England by a French general, Marshal Camille Tallard, whom Marlborough defeated and took prisoner at the overthrow of Blenheim, in 1704. He was a tremendous creature at home, being a count and a marshal, and he knew England, as he had been ambassador here in 1697. When brought by powder-blackened Corporal Trim and his friends before the impassive English duke, Tallard said:

"Your grace has beaten the finest troops in Europe."

"You will, I hope," replied our man, "except those who have defeated them."

The marshal being thus beaten both by English hands and English tongues, remained with us, diffusing the knowledge of celery, fragrant ingredient of the best soups, until 1712, when he returned to his master, Louis the Fourteenth, and was made a duke. He became secretary of state in 1726, and two years after ceased for ever to read official papers, to burn official sealing wax, and to diffuse a knowledge of celery.

A confusion between the Latin words for parsnip and carrot compels us here to pour forth some long accumulating gall against Pliny. We have been lately still more embittered by a serious discussion in a German writer as to whether the Blitum of Pliny was spinach or amaranth, (oh, vexed ghost of Milton, only think of amaranth used in salad!) and whether their Buglossum was borage, the blue flowered weed which we put into cider cup. It is quite impossible—that is the simple fact, and we boldly avow it—to define either Pliny's animals, fish, or herbs. It is a mere chance whether the creature he writes about, is a mule, a zebra, or an ass; whether the fish he mentions is turbot, cod, or good red herring; whether the plant on which he expatiates, is plum, pear, or quince. In fact, his farrago of imperfectly digested learning is all missorted and unindexed, and has become very nearly what printers call "pie."

Here and there a sound fact, an entire letter, a clear line, remains. The rest is blurred, topsy-turvy, gone to pieces. For our own sakes we would rather have six sound records of observation from the Field newspaper, from that fine observer Gosse, even from the precocious Eton boy, than all the jumble of Pliny's thirty-seven books of untranslatable Natural History.

Hume, the historian—who knew as little of our past social history as Dr. Johnson knew of the two principal languages required for the writer of an English dictionary, Celtic and Saxon—has a foolish and wild statement, which has since passed current as good money among the writers on culinary vegetables. The statement is that, till the end of the reign of Henry the Eighth, carrots, turnips, and salads were unknown in England: Henry's Spanish queen having always, when she wanted a salad, to send couriers to the great gardens of Holland or Flanders. This may be true of lettuces, which first arrived here from Flanders, welcome guests, in 1520. Otherwise, the statement is nonsense. Salads were favourite food in the middle ages, and were much needed to cool the hot wine, the spiced dishes, and the incessant salt meats. Chaucer's men had their sharp winter cresses, their water cresses, their common Alexander, their goat's beard, their rampion, rocket, and borage, their amaranthus and goose foot, their good Henry, their monk's rhubarb, and their pepper-wort.

We will not let the poor creatures be robbed of their salad, even though they are dead and buried.

In all good cooking, vegetables hold a subordinate but still an honoured place. Leeks sodden, and turnips float on our broth, but the French do not use vegetables in so uncouth a way. Suppose we examine some of their savoury and appetising ways of cooking vegetables, and of employing them when cooked. Take épinard (spinach), by some considered mere chopped hay, by others prized and valued as the pleasant and most lightsome matelas (mattress) for a fricandeau, a dish which goes far to remove our insular contempt for what we are pleased to call flimsy and greasy kickshaws (quelque chose). Spinach holds a high rank in Paris kitchens, because its soft dark leaves can be gathered for eight or nine out of the twelve months. This vegetable, although so humble, is called by French gourmands, "le désespoir de l'avarice et de l'industrie," as its preparation is expensive and difficult. It is like the flint stone in the proverbial soup; it wants so many other ingredients to make it good. It is like virgin wax, it is susceptible of any impression. By itself it is trivial, but in a clever man's hands it becomes a gem of value; so did a shilling's worth of Roman canvas become a sheet of gold under the touch of Raphael. It is wholesome either with gravy, butter, cream, or coulis. It will make soups, tarts, rissoles, or creams. After sorrel it is the best bed upon which a fricandeau can repose, and on its green pulp rests well, both the scarlet tongue and the smoked beef of Hamburg. It is a resource on the poor man's board, it is the glory of the rich man's table; yet its chief value is given it by the hands through which it passes.

The cauliflower is as wholesome as spinach, and requires less talent in the cooking. It is nice with white sauce, and good with mutton gravy; it can be eaten "frit en pâte," and it is delicious with parmesan. It serves to garnish ragoûts and it will make a salad of merit. The head must be white, close, and firm.

Ude says that thistles are not much relished in England, "but in France are held in the highest estimation." Thistle is an entremet usually selected by a French chef to try the skill of a new cook. Chardons are delicious stewed with Spanish sauce, and mix well with poached eggs. They are perfect with beef marrow or with white and velouté sauce. The Spanish thistles are the best, being of the artichoke race. A French epicurean writer says "this dish is the ne plus ultra of human science, and a cook who can cook thistles well is entitled to rank as the first artist in Europe." Under the old régime, the light of glory shone especially on the powdered wig of the Count de Tesse, first groom of Marie Antoinette. He was lost in the flight of the emigrés, and never came to the surface again. Thistles en maigre and au parmesan are not difficult to cook, and are extremely good. Persons of inferior genius should endeavour to acquire glory by first cooking their thistles in the humbler styles.

The French consider celery best in salad, and in sharp sauce mixed with Maille or Bordin mustard. It is useful, too, with gravy for braised mutton and large entrées; but the crême au celeri is thought a special triumph of the kitchen. The cabbage, despicable only in the eyes of pride, forms a pleasant wall round a rump of beef, and the French sometimes (but with questionable taste) entomb a roast partridge in the same vegetable. A cabbage à la Bavaroise is a favourite mattress for a ragoût. About the beginning of the century, sauer-krout, the natural dish of Germany, borrowed it is supposed from the Turks, became popular in Paris. Scorzonera makes an excellent soup when seasoned with parmesan and fried.

We use mushrooms in cooking, nearly as freely as the French, but we cruelly neglect the mushroom's cousin, the little fragile nankeen-coloured champignon, which is excellent in ragoûts, and serves for half the catsup that is christened *mushroom* in London. The French eat champignons greedily, à la crême, fried or stewed. They dry them, and preserve them in vinegar. Above all, and this is an excellent hint, they powder them for winter use.

The white haricots — the best come from Soissons—are often used in France as the mattress for a leg of mutton, and very nice they are. There is also a good thick soup to be made of them.

Welcome pleasant April! Thou bringest asparagus. The largest and best in Paris comes from Vendôme. We eat them with melted butter, the French often with oil. They are by no means bad, when small, cut up to resemble green peas. They can be eaten with cream or gravy, and even in omelets; and they are used as garnishing to many sorts of ragoût. Asparagus is the very essence of beatified green buds, and conveys a foretaste of spring to the sensitive palate of the gourmand. Hail, too, gentle May! because, with songs of birds and wandering perfume of flowers, thou givest us green peas, the best, the most inviting, and the most delicate of vegetables. An old French proverb says, "Eat green peas with rich men, and cherries with poor," because peas are best very small and young, and should be gathered on the morning they are to be eaten. It would take a folio volume to describe all the French ways of cooking peas. They make sweet little green beds for cutlets and pigeons; they mix with fricassees, palattes of beef, and calves' ears; in fact, there is no animal, as the Almanach des Gourmands eloquently says, which does not feel honoured by their alliance.

French beans (O that some genius would teach us how to preserve them for winter!) are delicious when small and young; but when your fruiterer calls them peculiarly fine, and sells them at so much a hundred, they are only fit to throw on the dust heap. At Lyons, they cook them with chopped onions. They are not bad with sauce poulette—a sauce thickened with yolks of eggs, a little butter, pepper, and salt, and the juice of half a lemon. The Provençal way is with oil and garlic.

When the leaves begin to turn, and autumn scorches the beech leaves a pie-crust colour, we have our consolation in the savoury artichoke. Amiable vegetable! But let us observe that a good artichoke must be young and tender, and one proof of youth is that the stalks must break without being thready. (By-the-by, useful fibrous thread could surely be extracted from this plant when old.) For the fry à la Provençal and à l'Italienne, sprouts of the artichoke are used. An eminent French cook says, "a hedge of artichokes fried of a fine colour and garnished with fried parsley, is one of the most ravishing coups d'œil nature or art can offer as an entremet; to guests who have already eaten too largely, this gentle cousin of the ill-tempered and boorish thistle is wholesome, nourishing, stomachic, and astringent. It is especially suitable for the ordinarily strong brain and weak stomach of men of letters when cooked, but when raw, and eaten à la poivrade, it is a simple poison acid cruelly astringent, and is only fit for the "dura ilia" of navigators, coal whippers, bricklayers, and stokers. The most delicate artichokes in Paris come from Laon; you may know them by their pineapple sort of leaves looking tired and flaccid with the journey. The bigger artichokes are best plain with melted butter or oil, but the small are chameleons capable of many changes, and are all the better for the encouragement of sauce. They are excellent in the Spanish way or with gravy and verjuice. They are useful in fricassees. They make a good basis for white soup. They fry well. The Provençal way is to eat them with lemon juice or Spanish sauce. Ude recommends saving up artichoke bottoms en canapés, to be served cold for entremets. You first pour on the centre of each white saucer of the cul d'artichaux, some anchovy or Montpelier butter, and decorate these cheese cakes of vegetable with capers, slices of beetroot, and pickled cucumbers, and then pour over all some creamy salad sauce garnished with cresses. If a man of taste and sentiment, you will add slips of anchovy, and the whites and yolks of hard boiled eggs. Artichoke bottoms keep for a long time, if properly dried, and are excellent for meat pie, or for garnishing ragoûts.

A certain French genius who never emerged from the kitchen, and there perished in his prime from an unrestrained fondness for green Chartreuse; after describing the five hundred and forty-three ways in which eggs can be cooked in France, writes thus:

"Eggs are the most gracious presents that Divine Providence ever bestowed on man."

What the lover of the liqueur that so much resembles green hair oil, asserts of eggs, we would rather he had applied to vegetables. The French ridicule us for being savagely carnivorous and not diluting our meat with more bread, vegetables, and other anti-putrescents. We laugh at the French for indulging in washy soups and trivial messes. Both nations may be right, and we are inclined to think they are. Our climate requires food to supply muscle and to warm the central furnace of the heart; their climate gives our gay neighbours less appetite for heavy joints. The French are indubitably right in their love of vegetables, which supply valuable properties to the blood, and not only cool but enrich it.

The custom of preserving vegetables in sealed bottles full of vinegar, is very old on the Continent. It was a desperate and clumsy effort to carry the gifts of summer through the snows and rains of winter. They proved man's pluck, but they were for a long time a dreadful failure. The Dutch began with the finest and most delicate vegetables, such as French beans and Windsor beans. Petits Pois for cutlets were common in the Paris Halle about 1802, but were generally half fermented, or dry, withered, and sapless. When the war with England came, or in the language of a French culinary writer of eminence, when "English tyranny took possession of the seas and declared war against the commerce of all nations," these luxuries became more necessary. It was at this crisis that a great man arose. M. Appert, of the Rue de la Verrerie, took large gardens at Massey, near Antony, four leagues from Paris, and there devoted his large mind and busy hands to gathering vegetables and potting them

on the spot. He made great improvements in the art of preserving vegetables, and, in the windy language of the day, carried the month of May into the heart of December.

Dr. Kitchener, often eccentric, but always full of shrewd common sense, has left some useful remarks on cooking vegetables, the look and taste of which he truly says, form a great mark of difference between an elegant and an ordinary table. In London, vegetables are apt to be stale, and freshened up with water. They should be nearly full grown, fresh picked, green, and plump. They must soak for an hour after being rinsed, and must be boiled with plenty of water. Every moment's neglect stamps an indelible mark of second class on vegetables. If the boiling have been stopped, they will be brown instead of green. If not taken up at the moment when they sink, they will be dull and dingy. If not well drained, they will be mashy. The quicker they boil, the greener they will be; take care, moreover, to put in the bigger vegetables first; mind that in large cauliflowers the stalk and flower can never both be well cooked; and you will have your vegetable-marrows marrowy, your peas buttery, your broad beans soft, your French beans tender; and your potatoes balls of flour.

And this recalls us to one of the most important branches of the Apician art—the most dangerously simple in appearance, but in reality the most rarely attainable. Was it not Lord Sefton, or some other equally celebrated epicure, who, being on the committee of a club deciding on the choice of a new chef, after the most abstruse subtleties of art had been exhausted, put this simple and staggering question:

"Can you cook a potato?"

Whether the chef fainted or challenged Lord S., tradition—being, indeed, often rather hard of hearing—has not condescended to relate.

But Lord S. was right; no doubt in the mere boiling of a potato the profoundest chemical laws are evolved, and a Faraday might have lectured upon the process as embracing all the mysteries of the kitchen. It involves the discovery of the powers of steam, and the laws of caloric; though all these are known by implication to every good and thoughtful cook. The worst of potato cooking is, that no experience in the art seems to teach it to the ordinary domestic.

Choose your potatoes carefully; the yellow are more worthy than the red, and the red are more worthy than the white. Potatoes are best of a moderate size, without specks, heavy, and clear in the rind. They should not be washed until they are pared and prepared for cooking. Boil, Dr. Kitchener (what a fortunate name for a writer on gastronomy!) says, potatoes of the same size together: otherwise the smaller ones will be boiled to pieces before their larger brethren are softened at the core. Above all things, do not fill your saucepan more than half full; and remember that it is especially important not to put more water than will cover the potatoes about an inch, so that, allowing for waste in boiling, they may still just be covered.

Set them on a moderate fire till the lid of the saucepan begins to trot and bump; then lift the pot off the fire to the hob, there to simmer as slowly as possible, till the potatoes will admit the prongs of a steel fork. Moderate sized potatoes take about twenty minutes boiling. The cracking of the coats is no proof of their being done, as some potatoes, when boiled too fast, will open before they are half done; when the fork test satisfies you, pour off the water, uncover the saucepan, and set it by the fire for fifteen or twenty minutes, so as to let the moisture pass off in steam. The potatoes will then come to table dry and mealy. This mode Dr. Kitchener much preferred to steaming.

ALONE IN CHAMBERS—THE OLD LATIN GRAMMAR.

My poor old dog's-eared Latin grammar,
 Sole relic of my schoolboy years,
When knowledge, like a great sledge-hammer,
 Battered my brain amid my tears.
I gaze upon thy woful pages,
 And think, remembering parted pain,
That no philosophers or sages
 Would like the past to come again.

I know I wouldn't. Greek and Latin
 Made misery of my youthful time;
Though mathematics I was pat in,
 And not amiss in rhythm and rhyme.
My boyhood's days were days of grief,
 My appetite outran my dinner;
And pocket money's scant relief
 Still left my appetite the winner.

And then the pangs of hopeless passion,
 Which in my burning teens I knew,
Though comic in a certain fashion,
 Were bitter sorrows while they grew!
I long'd to leap Time's bars and jailers—
 To be my self's own king and lord;
To pass "the Rubicon of tailors,"
 And fight the world with pen or sword.

Great were the ambition and the folly
 That sent my soul to future days,
Amid a present melancholy,
 To seek for glory and its bays.
I thought all pleasures were before me—
 Love, Fortune, Fame—all bliss combined.
Poor fool! ere forty years flew o'er me
 I'd left the best of them behind.

Still Fortune or its chance is left me,—
 My stomach's good, my brain is clear;
My heart is hard, for it bereft me
 Of twice five thousand pounds a year.
I might have married all that money,
 But chose to wed a poor young maid—
Fair as the morn and sweet as honey,
 Who loved me dearly—I'm afraid.

This grammar stirs my soul too sadly!
 Go rest, old relic, on the shelf!
I fear my life has passed but badly;
 I do not care to know myself.

I've got a chance for Rottenborough;
And if I win—my sun's not set—
I'll aim at public life—go thorough—
Who knows?—I may be Premier yet.

And if I be—a spirit nudges
Close at my elbow—won't I make
Bishops, ambassadors, and judges,
For Glory's or for Mischief's sake?
If not, what matters? Brookes's, Boodle's,
Or other stupid clubs of mine,
Will yield the scorner his old corner,
His dinner, and his pint of wine.

WALKS AND TALKS WITH THE PEOPLE.

NO. II. THE SLOP TAILOR.

About two years and a half ago, on a breezy morning in June, I indulged in a long day's walk for health and pleasure; on the once great northern road from London. I plodded cheerfully along through the green lanes of Hertfordshire, towards the city of St. Albans, and remembered, as I went, that this comparatively lonely and deserted highway was, in the days before Stephenson, the busiest and most crowded in England; the one on which the greatest number of his Majesty's mail coaches, with their four spanking steeds, their red-coated, and often red-nosed coachmen and guards, and their small complement of passengers outside and inside, the outside the jolliest, bowled pleasantly along at the rate of ten or twelve miles an hour, and when the passengers thought, if they thought upon the subject at all, that this was the perfection of travelling, and that the wit and ingenuity of man could devise nothing better, swifter, and more commodious. Turning this matter in my mind, and almost regretting that the mathematical discomfort, and dangerous speed of the railway, had driven off all the old stage coaches, and ruined most, if not all, the cozy old inns and hostelries of the way side, I heard the steps of a pedestrian behind me. I slackened my pace and allowed him to overtake me, that I might ascertain whether he were companionable or churlish, whether he were gentle or simple, a sturdy beggar, or a pathetic tramp who meditated an appeal to my pocket. He was a man of about five-and-thirty; looked sickly and sallow, and half starved; and was respectably dressed like a working man, wore thick-soled shoes, and carried a stout stick in his hand, and a small bundle on his back. I saw at a glance that he was not a loiterer, or one bound on a short errand, but that his walk was to be a long one. Judging from something slouching and awkward in his gait, as well as from his small hands, his somewhat effeminate appearance, and his air of thoughtful melancholy, I made up my mind that he must be either a shoemaker or a tailor. Somehow or other, the members of these two useful handicrafts have always a serious and meditative look. Their occupation gives them no food for the mind; and they think over their work, or think that they are thinking, which comes to about the same thing with the great majority of people. I was not deceived in this man's occupation, for he turned out to be a slop tailor; and a person of considerable determination and independence of character. After the usual interchange of words—they need not be called ideas—about the weather, the state of the road, and the aspect of the country through which we were passing, I learned by degrees, as we trudged along together, the story of his life and sorrows, his trials and privations, and his hopes of a better future.

His elder brother, a wild, restless, and enterprising youth, had gone to sea twenty-five years previously, and had unexpectedly prospered in America. After many ups and downs, and trials of various modes of life, he found himself in possession of a good farm in Wisconsin, and had sent to England, and lodged in a bank at Liverpool, a sum sufficient to pay his younger brother's expenses and those of his wife and three children, from London to the Far West; including an extra ten-pound note for unforeseen contingencies.

"You may guess," said my companion, whom I shall take the liberty in these pages of calling Mr. Crump, "how glad I was to receive such glorious news, and to have such a splendid offer, and the ready money into the bargain. I could only touch the odd ten pounds of the money, which I did two days ago. I have given seven pounds to 'the old woman,' to pay off a few small debts, take leave of her friends and relations, and come down with the children, third-class, to Liverpool, in a fortnight, when the ship sails in which our passage is taken; and have kept three pounds for myself. I shall walk to Liverpool, rain or shine; unless I fall ill by the road, when I shall have to be sent on by rail. This, however, I don't expect, as I am not weakly by nature; and the fresh air and the sight and smell of the fields will do me good. I have sat cross-legged on a bench for so many years, making slop trousers and vests, for Aaron and Co., that I want to take the cramp out of my bones, and to feel that I am a man, and not a sewing machine. I have worked and toiled for more than twenty years, and for twelve hours a day, in close rooms, and stinking alleys, more than half-starved, all the time; and I feel that this kindness of my brother has snatched me out of the very jaws of despair and death, and enabled me for the first time in my life to feel that I am of as much account in the world as a sparrow on the tiles, or the cat that tries to gobble it up."

"Are you able, do you think, not being accustomed to walking, to walk all the way to Liverpool in a fortnight, without being foot sore?"

"I am foot sore already. Better be foot sore than heart sore. I did fifteen miles yesterday, my first day on the road, I shall do twenty or twenty-four to-day, and as many to-morrow, if all goes well."

"Twenty miles a day are fair enough walk-

ing for a continuance. If you walk twenty miles a day for fourteen days, you make two hundred and eighty in a fortnight. You have time to spare and can take things leisurely. But will three pounds carry you through?"

"Like a prince! Three pounds for a fortnight! why that makes thirty shillings a week! and for twenty years my wages, working like a slave, have not been above fourteen shillings a week; when I was younger only ten or eleven."

"Did you work your whole time for this pittance? or did you take St. Monday, and half of Saturday, as holidays?"

"I had no holiday. There was no blue Monday for me. Every day was alike, twelve hours', sometimes fourteen hours' work, and Saturday was just like any other. Some of my mates worked half the Sunday, too, to screw up their earnings to fifteen shillings. But I never did."

"Why not? Have you any objection to Sunday work?" I put this question thinking that, for the first time in my life, I had fallen in with a specimen of that very rare bird, on English earth, a church-going London mechanic.

"I had very great objections."

"Were they serious?"

"Very serious."

"Religious?"

"Well! I'm not very sure. I think not. Six days' work in a week are sufficient for any man; and I like my Sunday's rest, and enjoy it."

"For the sake of going to church?"

"Church be ——!" Well, I cannot write his vulgar and obscene anathema. I pressed my question a little further. "If you don't go to church—why don't you? Do you prefer chapel? Or, if you neither go to church nor chapel, how do you employ the day of rest?"

"I don't go either to church or chapel, because I would rather read a book than listen to a sermon; and because the preachers tell me nothing that satisfies my reason, or comforts my soul—if I've got a soul. I don't go because I can't fee the pew-opener to give me a seat. I don't go because I don't think that I or any other poor man should be put in a place apart in God's own house, and marked as a pauper in a building, when the preacher tells us that we are all equal; or tells us sometimes that the poor are to be better off in the next world than the rich. Lazarus, you know, went to heaven and Dives to the other place. And, besides, Sunday is my only day for a little fresh air; and I like to go into the fields and lay on my back in the grass, if it does not rain, thankful to God, in my misery, that I can look up to the sky, and think of him as my Heavenly Father."

I did not like to press Mr. Crump much further on this point, though he was communicative enough, as will be seen, and might have thrown some light upon the theology of the poor, and shown where and how the church and the chapel fail to reach the classes below that of the small shop-keepers. I ventured on only one more question

"Do you understand the doctrine preached in church or chapel, if you ever go to either?"

"I understand as much as this—that I don't believe in the doctrine; or, at all events, that I believe in very little of it. I believe in the Rise of Man, not in the Fall of Man. It seems to me, and I have thought a good deal more on such subjects than you might imagine, that man has never yet had fair play in the world; and that the only place where he is likely to get it is in America."

My new friend, as will be seen, was an "advanced Thinker," and appeared, as far as I could judge, by his answers to my remarks, as well as to my questions, to have thought out these matters for himself, with the aid of hints in the newspapers. But he suddenly seemed to grow suspicious of me on this subject, as if he had a misgiving that I was a clergyman in disguise, or was going to inveigle him into a theological argument; so I dropped the subject, and gradually put him at his ease, which I did over a crust of bread and cheese and a glass of ale at a public-house parlour in St. Albans.

"How could you manage to keep a wife and three children on fourteen shillings a week?" I inquired, as we resumed our walk.

"Keep them! I couldn't keep them—though some people have to keep a wife and half a dozen children on the money. We lived in rags and misery, and had not half enough to eat. We had but a single back room; it was kitchen, parlour, bedroom, and workshop, all in one; and we only had a glimpse of sunlight on the tiles for a couple of hours a day. My wife earned a little at shirt making, about three or four shillings, that paid the rent and helped us along a little. She is a sober woman, and works as well as she can—never drinks anything but tea or coffee, and a little beer on the Sunday. If she had taken to gin, as many poor women do, I should have been in the workhouse or the madhouse, most likely."

"Had you butcher's meat for a portion of your diet?"

"Not what *you* would call butcher's meat, but we got something that answered the purpose; the rind of ham from the ham and beef shops, that they sell with odds and ends of skin and fat at threehalfpence a pound, and that makes tolerably good soup, with the aid of pepper and salt and a little rice and onions. Then we had beef bones to boil down into broth, with barley or rice. But it was a constant struggle to get bread enough for the children. Butter we never saw or tasted; and milk was not often within our means. Sometimes, in Whitechapel, where we lived, there was a glut of herrings or mackerel—three for a penny sometimes—and then we had a feast. Sprats, also, were sometimes the cheapest and the best food in the market—a slap-up luxury for the poor, I can tell you."

"Do you smoke?"

"No, thank Heaven! the smell of tobacco is disagreeable to me; and sometimes when I have been in company with half a dozen smokers in

the beer-shop at the corner of our alley, I have felt a cold sweat break out all over me, and rushed outside to avoid fainting. Why tobacco should serve me so, when other people enjoy it so much, I cannot tell; but it has been all the better for the old woman and the brats that I spent no money upon *that*. Some of my mates, who work for the same shop as I did, spend as much as ninepence a week on the filthy stuff. Ninepence a week would buy two loaves of bread, or half a pound of coffee. So my ninepence a week was well saved. And it is not only the beastly tobacco that costs money; it is the extra drink that goes along with it. And this makes the men sometimes beat their wives, or otherwise renders their homes miserable. Home is miserable enough, if it is but one dark room, full of squalling brats, without a drunken man, or, what is still worse, a drunken woman, in it, to make it a hell upon earth. I don't want to praise myself, but I do think my dislike of tobacco—or the dislike of tobacco to me—has made me a better man than I might have been otherwise. My mates often joke and jeer me for not smoking. Once, being foolhardy, I blew a few whiffs of a pipe that was offered me, and was as brave as a dragoon over it for about a minute and a half. It was the last time, and it's going to be the last time, if I live till I'm a hundred."

"What happened?"

"I was sick—sick to death—and it served me right. My mate thought I never would recover, and vowed never to offer a pipe again to anybody as long as he lived."

"Have you made up your mind what you are going to do in Wisconsin?"

"I'll do anything. Work on my brother's farm—dig the ground, cut down trees, feed the pigs—anything. Or I'll set up in my own business. It's a great business now, you know, in America since Johnson became President. Why people should laugh at tailors, as if their trade were not as good as any other, I have never been able to understand. Nobody laughs at a saddler, who makes, as I may say, clothes for horses, and yet they laugh at tailors, who make clothes for men—nobler animals, I take it, than horses."

"I imagine that the idea took its rise in warlike times, when men were wanted for fighting, and when none but women used the needle. Consequently, a tailor was supposed to do women's work."

"Possibly," said Mr. Crump; "and I for one would not be sorry if none but women did the tailoring of all the world. Still, I don't see why tailors, as I said, are not to be considered as good as saddlers, or shoemakers, or hatters, or glovemakers, or stocking-manufacturers. Nobody laughs at *them*. And as for the talk of its taking nine tailors to make a man, it is my opinion that it would take nine ordinary men to make one such tailor as Andrew Johnson. He don't allow the trade to be laughed at. He confesses he was a tailor, and glories in the fact."

"It shows his good sense not to be ashamed of his trade; but I do not see why he should glory in it."

"Why not?" said Mr. Crump. "The trade is as good as any other, and is the oldest in the world. Look here," he continued, "at a paragraph I cut out of a newspaper." Fumbling in his pocket, he brought out an old purse, and drew from it a scrap of print, which he handed me to read. It was the account of an interview of an American politician with President Johnson, in which the latter declared to his visitor that tailoring was the oldest of all the arts of civilisation; but that Adam and Eve were not competent to excel in it until a divine hand showed them the material on which they should work.

Mr. Johnson was reported in the paragraph to have said that, "immediately after the Fall, when our first parents first discovered that they were naked, they sewed fig-leaves together and made themselves aprons—poor stuff that would not hold together. But did they invent anything better? Not they. It needed the teaching of Heaven to put them on the right track."

When I had read it, and returned the paper to Mr. Crump, he put it carefully into his purse again, saying, "I borrowed a Bible when I first saw this; that I might understand exactly what the President meant, and I found in the third chapter of Genesis, verse the twenty-first, the words, which I got by heart. 'Unto Adam also and to his wife, did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothed them.' Adam and Eve, you see, only knew how to make fig-leaf aprons. The Almighty himself made the coats of skins for them, and taught Adam to be a tailor."

"You have had some education yourself, Mr. Crump: have you given your children any?"

"My education has been very poor and irregular, and amounts to little more than reading. I write badly; but still I *can* write, and can cypher as far as the Rule of Three. My father was able to send me to a day school till I was eleven or twelve years old. I have not been able to do as much for my children, but on wet Sundays, when I could not get out into the fields, I have taught my little boys to read. And when I get to Wisconsin they will be able to go to school. That's the country for me, where every child is taught, not by charity, but by right. That's the system I like. That's the country for my money!"

"But surely there are some schools in Whitechapel, where you could have sent your children if you had chosen?"

"Yes; charity schools, ragged schools, and such like; but poor as I am, I don't like charity. I want justice, and though my children *are* ragged, worse luck, I don't want anybody to call them ragged. I've got some pride in me, though I *am* only a tailor; but if my children had a right to their education, as children have in America, they should have gone to school, ragged or not ragged; but at all events as

neatly dressed as I could manage to make them."

I passed the whole day and walked more than twenty miles in Mr. Crump's company; and before we parted, when I wished him a very cordial farewell, gave him my name and address, and extracted a promise that after he had got to Wisconsin and settled down in his new home, he would write to me and let me know whether he liked the country and had prospered in it. He kept his promise, and less than six months ago, I heard from him that he was both a gardener and a tailor; and had far more to do than his hands could accomplish. His earnings were more in one day than they had been in London in a week. His boys not only went to school, but one of them worked in the garden and the other in the shop. He had butcher's meat every day, not alone for dinner, but for breakfast. His wife had a silk gown, a watch, and a gold chain, and had nothing to do but to attend to her family, which had increased since they settled in Wisconsin. He told me that his last new comer, a boy, born on American soil, would be eligible to the Presidency if he lived long enough, and had a chance of nomination, and that out of respect to the actual President and his former business, the child was named Andrew Johnson Crump. Mr. Crump it will be seen was altogether an exceptional slop tailor. He was so satisfied with America that he and his wife were saving up a few pounds to send over to England to help her brother and his family over, as he and she had been helped; and if Mr. Crump lives long enough, there is no doubt in my mind, from what I know of his character, that he will be as good as his word.

FAR WESTERN MAN.

The far Western American settlements of Great Britain and the United States yield us, in odd freedom from conventionalities of life and off-hand settlement of difficulties, much matter for laughter, but none for ridicule. There is a grandeur of its own in human energy that not only conquers land and wealth to the use of mankind, but proves the inner soundness of the stuff men are made of, by conquering also the bad passions of life. In regions to which lawless men are tempted, by the absence of all civilised machinery of law, the rascals are at last compelled to stand in awe of honest men. Throughout the Far West tracks of travel have been cleared of the white robber and assassin, and are safe except here and there from the hostility of native tribes. Property lying exposed to theft is, in many a new Western settlement, safer than in one of the towns of the old country. Public opinion has condemned the gambler, and condemns the idler. The foundations of a new society laid thus in the Far West, however rough they may appear, are strong and sound, and it is wonderful to see how fast the well proportioned building rises from them. Races of North and South join in the West, and do their pioneer work in a practical hard-headed way; parted, no doubt, from some of the advantages, but also from all the overgrown hypocrisies of civilisation. I look with respect even upon "whittling," as a symptom of the restless desire to be doing as well as talking. In the North Pacific, where there are such extensive forests and odd pieces of wood are lying handy, whittling seems to be the regular occupation of men's idle hours.

The municipality of San Francisco put up wooden posts to protect the side walks from fiery charioteers. Over these hung knots of eager disputants, and as mining stocks and swamp lands were being discussed, they whittled at the posts, until they became so thin that the wind blew them over. I have seen a man in a backwood church begin whittling the wood of the pew. At a trial in Grass Valley, each juryman began whittling at a piece of wood he had brought in his pocket for the purpose, regulating the energy of the action by the clearness of the evidence. The trial lasted through a second day, but as they had not expected a long sitting nobody had brought enough wood with him, and accordingly the benches suffered. First the gentlemen of the jury attacked that portion of the seat which showed between their legs, until it had assumed a vandyke collar-like form, and the assault on the other portion had proceeded so far when the judge finished his charge, that he made a calculation, that if the ends of justice had required the jury to sit for a third day there would have been nothing left for them to sit on.

Old skippers hang about the wharf also whittling. At Coose Bay there are only two marriageable girls, and these being run after by all the young men of the district, value themselves accordingly. Half a dozen Oregonian youths sit on the verandah in front of their respective houses during the whole of Sunday, while each lady looks out at her followers through the half-opened window. The lovers all the while are whittling bits of white pine, which is an easy wood to work, and valued for that purpose. At dark they move home, but the damsels find these visits profitable, for there is generally left behind a pile of shavings big enough to light fires for the rest of the week.

The Western man is a being of versatile genius. If he cannot succeed in one profession he will turn to another. There are plenty of lawyers who are miners, and merchants who are doctors all over the North-West. The head of the largest mercantile firm on the Pacific Coast, is one who was educated for, and practised many years in, the medical profession; and some of the most adroit politicians and "wire pullers," are styled "Doctor" from having at one time been in the same way in life. If one trade does not pay he commences in another, and if there is not an opening in Bullet City, he "vamooses the ranch," "makes tracks," or "gets up and gits" for Ground-Hogs-Glory, where there is said to be an excellent opening for either a butcher, or a lawyer,

or a tavern-keeper. He will establish himself in one or other of these callings, probably to "bust up," or to make two hundred and fifty thousand dollars—he is always going to make just that particular sum. He knows thoroughly that art, without which no new country can grow great — the noble art of "coming down." Generals and brigadier-generals of the great civil war are earning honest bread by industry.

The dashing cavalry leader to whom the young ladies wrote poems, is in the grocery trade at Chicago. One famous officer has gone back to the plough, another is a newspaper reporter, another is writing a History of Texas, while practising law and photography. The photography pays best, for he has a contrivance of his own for giving the Mexicans a very pale picture, which is said to suit them exactly, as they have a desire to appear as white as possible. Of such stock comes the true Western Pioneer. Notwithstanding the banter about his being so long in the legs and short in the body, that a hat and a pair of trousers make a good suit of clothes for him, he is a stalwart sinewy fellow, infinite of resource, rough in his talk, with little learning and no formal piety. Ready to work, no matter how often fortune defeats him, he is ever hopeful of "wrestling through somehow." A peculiar character has grown up in the valley of the Mississippi, which may be called the Western character. From the Mississippi it has spread, and is daily spreading more and more to Columbia. It is the out-growth of all circumstances surrounding it, including climate and soil, and the mingling of bloods. It tends to individualism, freedom, self-reliance, and large views; there is little of narrow sectarianism in its secular life or religion; little provincialism, that is to say, little of the prejudice that lives on for generations in an untravelled community.

The Western character developes freedom and takes in large calculations. This is more true of the man of Western cities, than of the farmer and the frontier-man, but still the character applies to all. A Western man thinks nothing of going one thousand or one thousand five hundred miles, and has no traditional feud with any class of Jew or Gentile. The elements of various nationalities flowing together Westward form a strong and tolerant community. If a man out West has his horse stolen, he mounts another and traces the thief; shoots him if he can. The extending prairies, immense lakes, grand rivers, seem to enlarge the whole conception of things. The big farm yields thousands of bushels of grain. The Western man may have twenty horses, a hundred mules, and a thousand head of cattle grazing in his pastures, and five hundred pigs fattening in his fields. He reads the price currents; knows all that is going on; forms his own opinions, and is loud and bold in the expression of them. He is a man of patient courage, who will lose thousands of dollars by the fall of the market, and make less account of it than he would of the laming of a favourite horse, or the loss of a faithful dog. If he doesn't turn his loss off with a laugh, and is pushed to speak of it, you may see the gleam of stern grit flashing from his eyes, as he tells you he will do better next time. He is full of reckless and mercurial daring. As impulsive as the Southerner, and yet practical in all things, he sees and takes always the short cut to his end. Feeling about the sacred character of ancestral acres never disturbs the mind of a man whose possessions were reclaimed from the wilds but yesterday, and may be left to-morrow. Whatever he has he will sell; and whatever you own he is willing to buy, providing he can make some "boot" on it. With him all things were made to buy and sell. A frontier man once described to me without the least idea of the strange character of the transaction, how he had "traded off a bible for a plaguey good fiddle." If anything you have on you, or about you strike his fancy, he will at once offer to buy it, and has no notion that certain pieces of property mayn't be for sale. My own experience has lain chiefly among the vanguard of these pioneers, the frontier man who paves the way for others less able or willing to cope with fortune; less traders than labourers upon the land. These are the people who are fast filling up with stern prose of the plough and the reaping machine, and the whistle of steam, what was once claimed by the pleasant poetry of the songs of the voyageur, the coureur des bois, and the hunters and trappers of the great Fur Companies. But perhaps it is better after all? Much as I have lived with the frontier man, I have grown in liking for the pioneer who is always "moving West."

Hailing generally from some border state, early in life, he has settled down on some "donation" claim. Making it his boast that he is "half horse, half alligator, wi' a touch uv the snappin' turtle," he soon has a good farm about him, and remains until, by the miserable style of agriculture learned in the cotton lands of the Mississippi, he exhausts the soil; or until he considers himself inconveniently crowded, upon hearing that he has got a neighbour eight miles off, and "more a comin'." Then he "kalk'-lates he'll move West;" and is not long before he "guess he'll locate"—still on the frontier in some Little Big Snipe Swamp, or Dead Indian Prairie. And there he does "locate," until the old causes operating, or his land becoming valuable, he sells out to some less enterprising settler, hitches up his old bullock team once more, and with his loose cattle, his horses, his long Kentucky rifle, his Douglas axe, his copper camp-kettle, and his long-handled frying-pan, off he goes. Not forgetting his bouncing "gals," who rightly boast that they can "lick their weight in wild cats," his four stalwart sons, each of whom can shoot the bristles off a wolf and drive a furrow so straight that, as they tell you, if followed up, it would "knock the centre out'er the north star, colonel," he moves, and moves, still West. Rumbling every summer over the great Plains go hundreds of such

teams and many such men, each fighting his way among Sioux, and Blackfoot, and Snake, until we find him in Oregon, Idaho, Nevada, or Washington territory, and possibly he even roams down, open mouthed in his wonder, to "Californy." But this part of the world is generally too civilised for him, and the polished Californians are not kindly affected to the individual in buckskin or homespun, whom they profanely style the "yallar-bellied Missourian."

The pioneer of pioneers must have been one Jedediah S. Smith (called "Jed" for shortness), who, on the 20th of December, 1826, strayed too far into the Great Desert, and from want of provision and water to get home with, was compelled to push forward. It therefore stands upon record as one of the many triumphs of the Smith family, that one of them was the first to make the overland trip from the "States" to California. Fortunately Jedediah found American shipmasters from Boston and Nantucket who vouched for his honest intentions and perfect harmlessness. He had attempted, during the latter part of the preceding winter to make his way up the Columbia River, but the snow was so deep on the mountains that he was obliged to return. Being informed by one of the Christian Indians that the father would like to know who he was, Jedediah wrote a letter to Father Duran, who lived at San Jose, in which he honestly confessed that he was destitute of clothing and most of the necessaries of life, that his horses had perished for want of food and water, that his object was to trap for beavers and furs, and in conclusion he signed himself, "Your strange but real friend and christian brother." Jed has been followed since then by many thousands, scattered now along the frontier. Among them it was my pleasant lot to wander many a day, and if they were queer fellows, they were good fellows; of more use to the world, I think, than many a fine gentleman who has never lifted heavier tool than an opera-glass, or served his country with a stroke of thought.

NO COMMUNICATION.

We were closely packed (in number, thirteen of us) in the middle compartment of a second-class carriage on the Midland line, some two years ago. Our carriage was the centre carriage of a long train, and the compartments on either side were empty. The journey, from Bedford to London, was express, the pace near fifty miles an hour. We had stopped at only one little station, and we were now off on a clear run of forty miles, to be done in ten minutes under the hour, without stoppage. The oil-lamp in the roof of the carriage, flickered pale and wan in the broad daylight—for it was noontide—and in the glass cup beneath, a spoonful of oil wagged and jogged and lurched about with the motion. The company was monotonous and taciturn. Being wedged in the middle of the seat between two gentlemen of enormous proportions, where it was impossible to command a window, I took to looking at this drop of wagging oil as the only available object that kept time to the jolting and swaying and clatter of the train. Although watching the drop of oil intently, and noting the lively interest it seemed to evince in our progress—leaping forward as we ran whish-sh past a station, or vibrating as cr-r-r-sh-shoot we shot by another train—I was aware of the wainscotted woodwork round it and the painted oak shingle that seemed to dance and quiver with our motion. I saw it without looking at it. What surprised and puzzled me, however, was this: my eyes told me the pattern of the wainscot was changing. New shingle seemed to rise up and swallow up the old, and then the whole appeared to rise and fall in tiny waves. The solution my mind suggested was, that I had biologised my sight, the oil-lamp serving as a disc.

My fellow-passengers began to talk. I heard them, my eyes were still fastened on the jolting drop of oil, which was beating time to a tune that engine, carriages, and rails, were playing in my head.

"Anybody smoking?" a deep voice said, snappishly.

It seemed there was not.

"Then something is burning," another voice said.

"It's only the guard putting the breaks on," some one else explained.

I knew this was not so; our pace was unchanged; we had thirty more miles to run before the breaks would be put on. I saw why the pattern on the wainscot changed. The paint rose up in great blisters, and the smell of burning paint became powerful. The roof was on fire! Fearing to alarm the rest by an outcry, I momentarily scanned the faces of the passengers, who were loudly complaining of the smoke. I was trying to find a face that had a quiet spirit of help in it. I saw in the corner a calm-faced man of thirty, caught his eye, and pointed to the roof; for his was the only face in which I had confidence. I was right.

"Don't be alarmed," he said, addressing the passengers and pointing; "it is there—the lamp; it has just caught the woodwork a trifle; there is no danger; I am an engineer, and will stop the train."

Looking up, we all saw a brown blistered cloud spreading over the roof, and heard the hissing and crackling of burning wood. The carriage quickly filled with smoke and became very hot; for the fire was fanned by a fifty-mile-an-hour blast.

"Do as I do," the engineer-passenger called to me, flinging me his railway key.

I got to one door, and opened it, as he had done the other. Leaning out of the carriage, the engineer-passenger then gave a long shrill whistle, produced with two fingers against his teeth, harsh and grating almost as a railway whistle. I imitated him as I best could, and by incessantly slamming the doors on both sides

we kept up such a tattoo as one would have thought could not fail to attract the attention of the guard, or the driver, or both. But five minutes passed, and we had not even made ourselves heard in the next carriage. Meantime tongues of fire were darting through the roof, and the volumes of hot pungent smoke became almost insupportable. The rest of the passengers appeared utterly bewildered; crouching together on the floor and against the draught of the doorways for air, feebly crying at intervals, "We are on fire!" "Fire!" "We shall be burned alive!" Two wished to jump out and risk certain destruction rather than burning or suffocation; but we kept the doors.

The engineer made a good captain; he found them something to do. "Use your voices, then," he cried; "shout away, but altogether. Now!" And every one shouted "Fire!" with a will, and we resumed banging the doors. We had made ourselves heard at last in the next carriage, but the occupants were powerless to help us, and did not even know the cause of our dismay. As to communicating with the guard, it was simply hopeless.

Ten minutes had gone since first we saw the roof blister. We had twenty good miles to run, and the daggers of flame were leaping far down from the roof.

"Don't be afraid," said the engineer; "if we can't get the guard to help us, we'll help ourselves."

He tied handkerchiefs to umbrellas and sticks, and gave them to two passengers to wave out of window to attract attention at the next station we shot past; some one might see our condition, and telegraph on to stop us by signal. At least, it would serve to keep the passengers quiet by finding them employment, which was a great point. Then he said, turning to me:

"Whatever is the cause of the fire, it is something *on* the roof, and not the roof itself. Will you climb the roof on one side, while I do the same the other? Only mind and get up to windward to clear the flames."

We each set a foot on the door-rail, caught hold of the luggage-rod and swung ourselves up on the roof that was dashing along and pitching and tossing like a wild thing in a whirlwind. We could only kneel, for the rush of wind at the pace we were going would have carried us away had we stood up. The crash, the rattle, the swaying, the cutting draught, and the arches we shot through, that seemed to strike us on the head and make us cower down as we flashed by, the dazzling rails and the swift sleepers flying past in a giddy cloud, took my breath for the moment. But the engineer was busy cutting adrift, with his pocket-knife, a flaming pile of tarpaulins which the lamp had kindled, and which the wind was now drifting away in great pieces of fire along the line. I helped him with my knife and hands, and between us we quickly had the worst of the burning mass over in the six-foot way. The roof however was still burning badly, the fire eating out a large hole with red and angry edges that flickered fiercely in the draught. With the aid of bits of the unburnt tarpaulins, we managed to rub these edges and stifle and smother out the worst of the fire, until the occupants of the carriage had really very little to fear.

Whether the guard or engine-driver observed us on the carriage roof and so pulled up the train, or whether the handkerchief signals of distress were seen at some station whence the station-master telegraphed to a signalman to stop the express, I never ascertained; but as soon as the fire was well-nigh subdued, the train slackened and stopped. And I well remember that while the officials were busily engaged in drenching the now empty carriage with buckets of water, a director, who happened to be in an adjoining carriage, very severely reprimanded us for what he told us was an indictable offence, namely, leaving a train in motion. As we stood there with blackened faces and black blistered hands, it scarcely occurred to us to make the obvious defence that, in an isolated compartment, without any possible means of communication with the guard, we had had no alternative but to choose between burning, and breaking the company's rules. I do not know the engineer-passenger, and I have never seen him since, or I would have exchanged congratulations with him on the company's having had the merciful consideration not to take proceedings against us.

BUONAPARTE THE HAPPY.

About eight miles from Florence, and situated on the brow of a high and wooded hill, is the town of St. Casciano, in a small street of which is the celebrated inn of the Campana, where Machiavel lived, and on the threshold of which, he used to be seen in his wooden shoes and peasant's suit, asking various travellers the news from their countries, or playing, laughing, and disputing with the landlord, the miller, or the butcher. The great author might be seen pruning the lime twigs in the morning, or superintending the cutting down of trees, and thus occupying himself with the things of common life—to calm, as he used to say, the effervescence of his brain. About twenty miles further on, is Certaldo, which boasts of giving birth to Boccaccio, though he was born at Paris, but lived a long time at Certaldo, and died there.

Between these towns, rendered illustrious by the memory of these two great men, is a little unknown hamlet, situated in the midst of a smiling valley. It has a church of no renown, and bare of art.

In the year 1807, there was a curé living here, called Buonaparte. He was poor and obscure, as if one of his name had never caused the Pope to leave the Vatican to crown him at Notre Dame, of Paris. He was mild and un-

ambitious, as if he were not the uncle of Letitia, and the great-uncle of the young general who had conquered Italy, saluted the Pyramids, and made and unmade kings in Europe. The curé, in the parsonage garden, was another Alcinoüs, training his vines around the five or six elms that grew on the little domain, and he wore, like the father of Ulysses, a tattered cloak and mended shoes. All the noise that his great-nephew was making in the world, passed over his head, without his hearing or heeding it.

No one in the neighbourhood suspected who he was; he had forgotten Corsica to remember only his parishioners, who were as simple and ignorant as himself. His gun, which he sometimes took out with him, provided his table with game; and in his little parlour were rods for fishing. These amusements, added to the cultivation of a few flowers, and the collection of tithes twice a year, were the temporal occupations of the worthy Buonaparte. As to his spiritual duties, he never made any innovations, but read the mass twice a week, and preached every Sunday after vespers.

There were, however, three objects which occupied the attention of the good priest more particularly than his other parishioners; they were a young girl, a youth, and a tame white hen. He had baptised and catechised the girl Mattea, and observed her growing youth and beauty with innocent pleasure; her beautiful dark eyes, graceful figure, and simple artless manners were admired by all. She was the pride of the village. The good man was constantly thinking of her future prospects, and had arranged a suitable match for her with Tommaso, his sacristan. He was a tall fine young man, and a constant guest at the presbytery; he was the priest's factotum; he worked in the garden, cooked, served at mass, chanted in the choir, ornamented the altars, and was chief butler at home. He was a good fellow, though rather noisy, and always the first and the most ardent in the village quarrels.

Such was the suitor whom Buonaparte had chosen for his young protegée, and Tommaso loved her devotedly.

The good curate was living peacably and happily among his flock and the two or three beings he especially loved, when one day an unaccustomed sound was heard in the village, horses' hoofs clattered on the stones, and the quiet court of the curacy was filled with a troop of cavalry. One of the emperor's officers, covered with gold lace, and with a plume of white feathers in his hat, dismounted, entered the modest parlour, and presented himself before the curé. The good man, trembling, rose, offered him a chair, and stood with hands crossed meekly on his breast, uncertain what martyrdom might be in store for him.

"Compose yourself, sir," said the general, "compose yourself, I beg. Is your name Buonaparte, and are you the uncle of Napoleon, emperor of the French, and king of Italy?"

"Yes, sir," murmured the curate, who had a confused idea of the fortune of his great-nephew, but who regarded it as one of those far-off things from which he was separated by several countries and an immeasurable distance.

"His majesty's mother," continued the officer.

"Letitia!" interrupted the curé.

"Madame has spoken of you to his majesty," rejoined the general.

"To little Napoleon?" said the curate.

"To the emperor, sir. It is not suitable that so near a relative of his majesty, and one of your excellent character, should languish unknown in a poor living, while his family is governing Europe, while your nephew, reverend sir, is filling the world with his fame. The emperor has sent me to you; you have only to speak, you have only to express a wish, and it shall be executed. What episcopal seat tempts you? Would you like a bishopric in France, or in Italy? Will you exchange your black cassock for a cardinal's purple cloak? The emperor bears you too much friendship and respect to refuse you anything."

Now the greatest personage whom the poor curé had ever seen in his life was the Bishop of Fiesole, who came to the village once a year to confirm the little boys and girls. After the episcopal visit the good man was usually dazzled and bewildered for a fortnight, by the remembrance of the fisherman's ring, the golden mitre, and the lace sleeves.

He hesitated a moment to collect his thoughts, and then said: "Is all this true, sir? Is my niece, Letitia, an empress? And to think that I heard her first confession! It was a long time ago—when she was a little girl!"

The general smiled.

"Allow me, sir," continued the curé, "to think for a moment; one must reflect a little before one changes one's position so suddenly."

The general awaited the orders of the pastor, who left the parlour and went upstairs into a little room, the window of which looked on the court.

All was tumult and confusion there; the general's escort had taken off their horses' bridles, and the soldiers were smoking and laughing amongst themselves. Mattea, concealed in a corner, was considering this novel sight with astonishment, while Tommaso was amusing himself by examining the swords and brilliant uniforms, and the white hen was running screaming and scared about the horses' feet.

Mattea's eyes gradually became familiarised with what she saw, and a dragoon, having remarked the young girl, approached and commenced a conversation with her. He was young, handsome, and gallant; Mattea was a little coquette, and not at all in love with the man whom her godfather had destined for her. What the young dragoon said, we know not; but it is certain that when Tommaso went to speak to Mattea, she sent him away, reminding him that it was twelve o'clock, and time for

him to go and ring the Angelus. Tommaso, whose jealousy was already roused by his dashing rival in his brilliant uniform, flew into a passion, and would not stir from the spot; on which the dragoon took him by the ear, twirled him round and round, and sent him flying amid a group of his comrades.

"And is it you, you great booby," said one of the soldiers, "who ring the Angelus here, and respond to the curate's paternosters, instead of being a man and serving the emperor? You will be in a good position, sapristi, when you are promoted to be beadle of this wretched village! Believe us, my lad. Leave your belfry and come with us. We will give you a handsome uniform, a long sword, and a fine horse."

"Is it that girl who keeps you here?" said another of the troop, pointing to Mattea, who was in a corner of the court-yard, in earnest conversation with her new admirer. "Is it that girl who keeps you here? Look at her well, she doesn't care for *you*, she likes the soldier. Look at her!"

During this time, a fat dragoon, whose rations no doubt did not suffice him, was chasing the curate's fowls about, and the white hen was vainly endeavouring to escape from her tormentor.

"Mattea! Go home to your mother directly," cried the curé from the upper window. "Dragoon! Please to let that fowl alone!"

The feeble voice of the curé had not the power of Napoleon's. The soldier continued to talk to the girl, and the fat dragoon continued to chase the white hen. Tommaso was stroking the croup of a saddle with one hand whilst the other was playing with a sword-handle. At last the assiduous dragoon went to fetch his horse, and sprang on it with one bound; then giving both hands to Mattea, he placed her on the saddle behind him, and without any respect for the curé or his house, set spurs to the animal and disappeared with the Italian girl. At the same moment the other dragoon caught the white hen!

"Mattea! Mattea! Oh! my poor Bianca! Dragoon! put down that fowl!" cried the poor curé with a trembling voice.

Tommaso, hearing his master's agitated exclamations, ran to the rescue of the hen; the poor fellow, not being able to save his sweetheart, did all he could to save Bianca.

Buonaparte left his room and came down to rejoin the general. The poor man was pale and trembling.

"What is the matter, monsignor?" said the general. "What can have agitated you thus?"

"My lord," replied the curé, in a melancholy tone; "my god-daughter, my dear Mattea, is taken off by one of your men."

"What! A young girl taken away from the house of the emperor's uncle! The fellow shall be punished; he shall be shot this very hour! Hollo! Brigadier! which of your men has been guilty of this crime?"

"Let no blood be spilled, I beseech you, general; let no blood be spilled; but if he be a good man, let him marry Mattea."

There had been no violence or crime. The Florentine Helen had suddenly become fascinated, and had gone off of her own accord with her Paris, who was a good soldier, and had been selected to have the cross of the legion of honour.

"He *shall* marry her. *I* will answer for that," said the general.

The curé was looking about him in a timid kind of way, seeking his favourite hen, but the severity of the general, who had spoken of shooting Mattea's lover, checked him. He would not compromise a man's life for the love of a fowl. Suddenly Tommaso came running back, holding the cherished Bianca in his arms; the poor thing was half dead with fright; her blue eyelids hid her round eyes; and her stiffened claws could not support her. The curé took her, opened her beak, and poured a few drops of wine down her throat; the fowl gradually recovered, (like a fine lady from hysterics) and began to flutter her wings. Tommaso seized the welcome opportunity of speaking to the curate.

"Sir," said he, "I have lost Mattea; the soldiers have promised me that I shall one day be a captain, a colonel, a marshal of France, and I don't know what besides. I—I—have enlisted for a dragoon!"

Buonaparte gave the general a sad look, as he smoothed his fowl's white feathers, and said to him: "General, I thank my nephew, the emperor, for his good intentions towards me, but I prefer remaining the curé of the poor and unknown little village, where I have been happy so long. I hesitated for a moment, and you see, God has punished me. . . . Say to Letitia that I hope (and believe firmly) she is still as good and conscientious as she was when a little girl. . . . Kiss my nephew, the little Napoleon, for me; may God keep them all on their thrones! They are good children for taking thought of their old uncle, but I desire neither a bishopric nor a cardinal's cloak. . . . Go, general, if you respect the wishes of your emperor's uncle, do not come here again."

When an officer received an order from the emperor, he was obliged to execute the imperial wish. If Napoleon said, "You are to take that town," it was necessary to take it; it was written that it was to be taken; his prophetic word was one of the thousand causes of his great success. Now, he had said to the general: "You will take my uncle, the curé, from his living, and make him come to Paris, or take him to Rome; he must be near me, or near the Pope; it matters not which; he will do well whichever he chooses, but it must not be otherwise; he must at least become a bishop."

The general entreated, supplicated, and, at last, insisted that the curé should alter his decision. The brave soldier could not understand a man's refusing the grand cross of the legion of honour, a bishopric, the revenues of a diocese, a cardinal's hat and influence. However, the good curé remained firm to his resolution;

he resisted the general's supplications, and when threats were used, he replied with the bitterness of an irritated Corsican, and with the authority of an aged relative, who was not to be coaxed or flattered by the inconsiderate youth and ambition of his great nephew: "General, I have given you my answer, and I will not swerve from it."

The disappointed general was forced to retire without executing his mission, and his noisy escort evacuated the village.

When Napoleon heard of the bad success of his ambassador and this utter want of ambition in a Buonaparte, he shrugged his shoulders with contemptuous pity.

Mattea was married to the dragoon, and became, in time, the wife of a colonel. Tommaso was, in a few years, a captain in the Imperial Guard.

And the good curé, Buonaparte, died before the termination of the first empire, beloved and regretted by all around him. Alas! he was, after all,—says the French account from which this little narrative is rendered into English—the happiest of his family.

PUNGENT SALTS.

Our British choral boast of "ruling the waves" is a very old one. We can trace it back to sturdy bloodthirsty ancestors among the old vikings who never sought shelter of a roof, who had no other kingdom to rule than the sea. Sea-kings who shouted their song in the midst of the tempest

> The force of the storm helps the arms of the rowers,
> The hurricane is carrying us the way we would go,

little dreaming of descendants in half a dozen mild elderly gentlemen of the present day, content to "rule the waves," from ten till four, at The Admiralty, Whitehall, London, W.C.

Almost all the information we possess of our piratical old ancestors, the wave-rulers of a thousand years since (for the lines about "the flag that's braved a thousand years the battle and the breeze," are singularly correct in their chronology) we derive from the Sagas, or songs of the Skalds, a collection of strange wild stories of adventure in verse or measured prose, by the Scandinavian bards.

The profession of pirate, or viking, was held highly respectable, and not disdained by men of the highest rank. The qualification for the service was the performance of some exploit of personal prowess, which should entitle a man to the confidence of a band of champions as their commander. The law of bravery laid down for the followers themselves was not unlike that hinted at in the old schoolboy's rhyme—

> Two skinny Frenchmen
> And a Portugee,
> One jolly Englishman
> Whacked all three.

It was understood that any man ought to beat a single enemy, that he ought to make a respectable appearance against two enemies, and to show fight against three; but that it would not be disgraceful to run away from four. Each viking governed his champions in his own way, gaining greater fame in proportion as his regulations were more strict and rigorous than those of his compeers. For example. Half and Hesrolf, both sons of a Norwegian king, took to the profession. Hesrolf had a number of ships which he manned indiscriminately with serfs and freemen, ruling them mildly. Hesrolf was beaten by almost every opponent. His brother Half had only one ship, but he picked twenty-three king's sons for his companions, requiring each as a test of strength to lift a mighty stone which twelve ordinary men could scarcely stir. He forbade to his champions the society of women or children; he made them bare themselves to the fiercest tempests, and would not allow them to dress their wounds in battle till victorious. For nearly twenty years Half was the terror of the Western Seas, with a reputation of never having been vanquished in fight. So stringent was his discipline that when returning home, his vessel overladen with plunder and nearly foundering in sight of the Norwegian shore, the crew drew lots who should cast themselves into the sea to save their viking his cargo. The losers jumped overboard without a murmur, so that the ship, relieved of their weight, came safely to land.

The viking could govern his vessel as a clever rider controls his horse. It was required of him to be able to run along the oars while they were in motion, and to throw three javelins to the mast-head, catching each alternately in his hand without once missing. He was not afraid of going out of sight of land, and never thought of coming to anchor when clouds hid the stars. True, he had no compass, but there was always a cast of hawks or ravens on board, and when in doubt about the direction in which land lay, he had only to loose one of these, satisfied that the bird would instinctively make for the nearest shore. Whither the bird flew he steered. It was all one to the viking what land he reached, so long as it was land and not his own land; for his aim was plunder, and his creed was, where there is habitable land there is sure to be that. The birds seem to have had an unfortunate propensity for leading these gentlemen to Ireland and Britain. Ireland, indeed, appears to have been the first of our islands favoured with the visits of the northern marauders, and Johnstone mentions a significant fact in connexion with their visits. "The fertile Erin," he says, "was long the great resort of the Scandinavians, who, from the internal dissensions of the natives, gained considerable footing." Poor Ireland! She was suffering from Fenians even in those days. However, by way of compensation, Ireland became a sort of Paris to the vikings, in setting them the fashions; for they took to aping Irish manners and talking Celtic, until the celebrated Irish King Brian Boru drove them out

of the country early in the eleventh century, and made Irish unpopular with the vikings.

It cannot be concealed that our predecessors in ruling the waves were a terrible set of ruffians. Not content with simple plunder, they butchered alike those who submitted to their outrages, and those who resented them, showing mercy neither to age nor sex. Believing themselves the avengers of Odin against disciples of all other religions, they were especially severe on the clergy, putting them to death with tortures, and burning their churches, as Scott says, "to light the way to their barks again."

Doubly terrible was the viking when "berserker." This was a violent kind of frenzy with which he was liable to be seized, attributed by various writers to intense excitement of the imagination, or to the use of stimulating drugs or drinks. In this state he became dangerous to friends and foes; he would foam at the mouth and vent his fury against trees and rocks; he would swallow red-hot coals and throw himself into the fire. If at sea when the fit came on, he would often slaughter half his crew and destroy his shipping before his companions could land him at some desert island, there to tear up the trees by the roots and commit all manner of havoc upon inanimate nature until, his strength exhausted, he would lie senseless and prostrate, then wake up recovered. Almost all the great vikings became "berserker" at times. Indeed, when a sea-king received any deadly insult from an enemy that he could not avenge, it seems to have been a point of honour that he should become "berserker" on the spot.

Halfdan was a king of Sweden and a viking besides. He had seized the crown from Sivald, and slain Sivald and his five sons, all in a state of "berserk" madness. When Hartben the sea-king came up with twelve champions to attack him, Halfdan offered to fight him and his entire crew single handed. This insolent proposal inflamed Hartben with such awful fury that he immediately became "berserker," and killed six of his own champions in the fit. He then rushed on Halfdan with the remaining six, but he and they all fell dead beneath the terrific blows of Halfdan's mace.

The viking's first vessel was nothing better than the trunk of a large tree hollowed out by fire like Robinson Crusoe's boat, and called "holk," a word still surviving in our language as "hulk." The British Museum contains a specimen of one of these ancient holks, found on the Sussex coast. But in process of time the viking became master of a much larger vessel, carved and painted and fashioned into the form of some fantastic monster, usually that of a dragon. Such was Rolf's famous ship called the "Dragon Grimsnoth." Often as their vessels were wrecked in the fierce North Sea storms, the hardy pirates who survived would yet defy the tempest, and even the gods themselves, holding on their course, as the Sagas say, "along the track of the swans."

A viking would marry occasionally three or four wives; but would seldom waste time on courtship. He evidently regarded it professionally. When he heard of a lady possessed of beauty and wealth, he would fit out his vessel and demand her of her father. Should the misguided parent refuse the honour of becoming his father-in-law, the viking burnt him out of his house, and returned with his bride, his vessel laden with all the spoil he could conveniently lay hands upon, by way of dowry. An unwilling father had no alternative but consent or fight. Regnald, a Norwegian king, who had refused the peremptory demand of Gunnar the Swedish viking, for his daughter Moalda, not only set himself instantly on the defensive, but hid the princess and all his treasures in a mountain cavern, determined to baffle his enemy, even if beaten. But Gunnar came with a fleet of vessels, and, after a fierce battle, killed the king, and contrived to find out the place of Moalda's retreat. He returned to Sweden with his bride and her treasures, and the Skalds sang his praises in the Kianesinga Saga.

Here is a love story from the Volsunga Saga. Hagbarth and his three brothers, all of them sea-kings and sons of the King of Drontheim, sailing together in the North Sea, met the fleet of the sons of the Danish king Sigar. They fought, of course. The battle lasted all day, and at night was still undecided. A circumstance of frequent occurrence among the vikings then happened: each contending party becoming suddenly impressed with the bravery of his opponent, the weapons fell from their hands in mutual approbation of each other's valour; and, having sworn eternal fidelity—ratifying the treaty by mingling blood drawn from each other's veins in token of indissoluble union — the Danish princes invited their enemies of an hour before to visit the court of their father. Hagbarth and his brothers enjoyed the hospitality of King Sigar for many days; but, during their sojourn in Zealand, Hagbarth gained the heart of the king's daughter, the Princess Signa. The Danish princes, however, refused him her hand, contrary to their father's inclination, on the ground that he was not their equal in birth. Hagbarth and his three brothers, in defiance of their treaty, immediately hewed the Danish princes in pieces before their father's eyes, and fled. But Hagbarth found existence insupportable separated from her to whom he had pledged his troth. Disguised as an old woman, he returned to Zealand, and obtained admission to Signa's chamber. He swore to live or die only by her side. A courtier recognised him as Hagbarth, and, notwithstanding his becoming "berserker" and performing prodigies of valour, he was overpowered by numbers and taken prisoner. Some of the council of nobles who tried him were for sparing his life, and proclaiming him the husband of Signa, on account of his bravery; but by sentence of the majority he was condemned to be hanged, and that by a rope made of "widdie" (twigs), for the greater disgrace. They brought

out Hagbarth to be executed before the window of the princess's apartment, in order to add the greater sting to his punishment. But Signa, who had vowed not to survive her lover, set fire to her chamber and perished in the flames. When Hagbarth saw this proof of her devotion, he besought his executioners to hasten his death, that he might the quicker rejoin her faithful spirit in the Halls of Valhalla.

The passion for maritime adventure seems to have animated the female breast into rivalry with the opposite sex, for many ladies of high birth exchanged the veil for a heavy coat of linked armour and a brazen helmet. Placing themselves at the head of a band of pirates, they became Skjöld-Meyar, Maidens of the Shield, distinguished as much for bravery in battle as for chastity and gentleness at home.

The wooing of a sea-queen was a hazardous business. Laying siege to her heart or attempting to captivate her affections was completely futile. The only way was to blockade her in some narrow bay, and then engage her in single combat. Generally, as in the case of Alfhilda, the chaste and beautiful Ostrogoth princess, there were a couple of notable champions guarding her person, who had first of all to be disposed of. Alfhilda's lover, a young sea-king, named Alf, slew these two in single combat. But Alfhilda was not so easily won. Clothing herself and her maidens in ring mail, and joining her crew of pirates, she embarked in her swiftest vessel, and gave Alf a year's long love chase. One after another Alf conquered every ship of her fleet, and then blockaded his mistress in the Gulf of Finland. She came out to fight. Alf grappled the maiden's ship, boarded it, and, after a terrific hand-to-hand encounter with the queen herself, he clove Alfhida's helmet with his axe, disclosing her beautiful features and long flowing hair. The sight of her beauty was too much for her adorer. He presented her his weapons; for he could fight no more. Alfhilda, doubly conquered by the valour and generosity of her lover, married him on the spot, while Alf's best champions availed themselves of the opportunity to take the sea-queen's maiden attendants to wife. For the whole of the year, in anticipation of some such result, Alfhida had carried a priest on board to perform the ceremony.

The legend of Wayland, the smith, who forged the viking's most treasured sword blades, of such admirable temper that they would cut through rock or iron without losing the edge, is too familiar for repetition; but it may be mentioned, in connexion with a strange legend of the old sea-kings, that Wayland was believed to have married one of the Valkyriur, or Choosers of the Slain. This was, however, probably no more than a mythological way of stating how keen were Wayland's sword-blades, and how fatal in use. The Valkyriur of the Sagas correspond to the Fates of the Greeks. These fatal sisters chose and foretold those who should fall in battle. They carried Odin's message of invitation to the warriors he loved best, to meet him in Walhalla, and they poured out the ale and mead for the solace of the heroes who sat round Odin's board. They visited the slain at sea in the form of swans, and carried the hero's soul straight to the line where the sea and sky meet, into Odin's presence, and into the halls of Walhalla.

The vikings found plenty of employment for the fatal sisters, for some of their battles were on a tremendously large scale, and resulted in fearful slaughter. At the naval battle of Bravalla, between Harald Golden Teeth, and Sigurd-Ring, the usurper of the Swedish throne, all the sea-kings and the Maidens of the Shield ranged themselves on one side or the other. Sigurd-Ring's fleet alone is said to have consisted of two thousand five hundred ships, and the number is not considered to be exaggerated, taking into account the small capacity of the little barks employed. There were seventy-four champions in the Danish fleet, while the Swedes boasted of ninety-six sea-kings, supported by all the picked archers of Norway. Harald, with fifteen kings and thirty thousand of his Danes, was slain, and the Swede bought his victory at a cost of twelve thousand of his bravest warriors. The tumulus which marks the burial place of the slain is said to be still pointed out. "We did not permit the ravens to be in want of food," says the Skald, "those who were slain became the prey of the ravens. We hew'd with our swords."

Dr. Taylor's Revolutions, Insurrections, and Conspiracies of Europe, a book of patient and scholarly research, which, for some unaccountable reason, fell dead from the press some twenty years ago, is the source whence most of the preceding information is derived.

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HESTER'S HISTORY.

A NEW SERIAL TALE.

CHAPTER XXII. A LITTLE WHISPER.

MISS MADGE put her finger on her lips, and closed the door, walking backward and forward across the floor on tiptoe. Hester had retreated to the fireside, and stood there, a little horror-stricken, yet with a fixed determination in the midst of her confusion, not to put much faith in what Miss Madge might confide to her. A recollection came struggling to her mind of words which Lady Humphrey had spoken to her about former friendships, and the overturning of such friendships, between herself and this family at Glenluce. Enemies, said Lady Humphrey, had made mischief. Evil tales had been told and believed. Hard things might be said. Let Hester not hearken to them. And in the same breath Lady Humphrey had announced her intention of watching over the troubled fortunes of Sir Archie Munro. Such generous rendering of good for evil had in one instant kindled Hester's enthusiasm, and exalted her benefactress to a place in her estimation which the lady had not before, and in no other manner could ever have attained to. To take her down from that place, she having been there so well established, would have given Hester the most exquisite pain, even though she had not time, at this moment, to realise, or even think of all that such dispossession might mean and entail. Evil tales were going to be told, hard things about to be said. Let Hester close her ears. Let Hester not hearken to them.

"Miss Madge," said Hester, a little sternly, "Lady Humphrey has been my friend. I ought not, and I will not, hear anything against her."

"Very nice in you, my dear. I like you for it, and I forgive you that little pertness on account of it. But all the same, my dear, I intend you to hear my little whisper. I will put you on your guard. An innocent young thing connected with such a woman ought to be put upon her guard. She writes to you, my dear, and you write to her. An innocent—young—thing!"

Miss Madge repeated the last words slowly, and with a tender meditating air seldom observed in the flighty lady's manner. She had taken Hester's hands and held her off a little, and looked her up and down, and then glanced at the fire with a sigh, as she had a trick of doing when especially moved in her heart towards the girl.

"Sit down, my dear, and make yourself happy, and don't look so exactly like as if I were Queen Eleanor standing over you with a drawn sword and a cup of poison. It is only a little whisper, and you need not believe it if you don't like it. I am not going to ask you to believe it. People who think proper to do so may believe, but for you it will be enough just to hear it. It will be painful to you, I know; but if you had to get both your eyes put out in order to save your life, your friends would feel bound to see it done. You will condemn my little whisper, deny it, and detest it; but you will never get it out of your memory, my dear. You may hunt it into the farthest closet, whip it down, and starve it. You may pile all your choicest furniture, and all your worst rubbish—if you have got any—on its head, but you will never get rid of it while you live. It will be there as your guardian, you little simple Fairlocks! better than a bull-dog at your gate, than a file of armed men round your door!"

It was getting dark in the tower-room at this moment, and the firelight had got possession of Miss Madge's grotesque shadow, and was making with it a weird pantomime on the wall; was sending it flying off on little wild excursions across the length of the ceiling, or gleefully flattening it down into a struggling heap against the scanty folds of the tapestry at the window. Hester's shadow lurked aside a little at her own elbow, out of the way of the violence of such play; only, at the flickering of one flame, it kept starting, starting, like something wincing in pain.

"Remember, my dear, that it is a secret. We do not tell it about the world. We never mention it even here amongst ourselves. If you were Miss Golden this moment, and were to ask me, 'Pray what do these hints about Lady Humphrey mean?' I should say, 'Nothing but nonsense,' and screw up my mouth and walk out of the room. Miss Golden is intimate with friends of Lady Humphrey's in London. We do not want to persecute Lady Humphrey. We only want to forget Judith Blake. But you, my

dear, you are neither Miss Golden, nor yet the world. There is a special reason why you should hear a little whisper."

"I give you warning, Miss Madge," said Hester, stoutly, "that whatever it may be I will not believe it."

"Well, my dear, you shall not believe it. If you have done with Lady Humphrey for ever, I will even allow you to forget all about it. But if you keep up a connexion with her, I advise you to remember, both for your own sake and the sake of the family in this house."

Miss Madge was grim and earnest. Her flightiness had fallen away for the moment, just as the capering flame had dropped down in the grate. By-and-by both would spring up again. But the energy and excitement of the fire, and of Miss Madge, had for the moment settled down into a solid glow.

"My dear, not to keep you longer in suspense," said Miss Madge, dropping her voice very low, "*she was suspected of attempting to poison Lady Helen.*"

"I don't believe it!" gasped Hester; but the colour had gone out of her lips.

"No, my dear, you don't believe it. We agreed about that. You don't believe a word of it. And now I shall go on. I was a child at the time, my dear. I am ten years younger than Lady Humphrey. I was a little girl of twelve, and Judith Blake was a young woman of twenty-two. A handsome creature she was, as could be seen in the world, only her style was a little severe. People were terribly afraid of offending her. Not that she ever flew out in a passion, but she just gave you a frozen-up kind of glance out of her eyes, and you knew that you were booked for the next little compliment she could find an opportunity of paying you. And her compliments were not nice, my dear. Even I, poor little monkey that I was, without many to notice me, would have rather sat in a corner all my days than be dragged out of it by a special attention from Miss Blake.

"Well, my dear, she had had it all her own way in this castle for a good many years, and she intended to keep having it her own way to the end of her days. She was a distant relation and dependant of Sir Archie's grandmother, the old Lady Munro, and she had lived in the castle from her childhood. Sir John—Archie's father, my dear—was a handsome young man at the time. Of course he and Judith had been playfellows, and he had a sort of affection for her. He was the kindliest creature that ever was born, and he was thoughtful about her dependent position. He made rather a fuss about her on that account; and the old lady, too, was kind and considerate, though she could be a hard old lady, too, as Judith learned to her cost.

"Judith had determined to be Lady of Glenluce, and she might have managed to gain her point, had not Sir John happened to meet with Lady Helen. Cousin Helen at that time was a lovely creature. You are not to judge of that from what you see now. She did not wear well. At that time she was as beautiful as a Parian statue, and delicate, very delicate. She hadn't a good head; none of our family had ever much head to speak of, though lately, since she has taken so much to hysterics and sal volatile, I must say she is more weak-minded than she used to be. But Helen had such a beautiful face that nobody ever thought about her head.

"My dear, Sir John fell in love with Helen, and Helen with Sir John, and the match was most suitable; and the old lady, Sir John's mother, was delighted at the prospect. And Helen was brought here upon a visit.

"I came with her. Helen was always very good to me. She liked to have me with her. It used to be a pleasure to me just to sit and look at her, she was so lovely. And Helen knew it, and she indulged me. She used to write to my mother, 'Send little Madge to me. I want to be admired. Nobody admires me properly but little Madge.' You see her beauty was such an admitted thing that she herself talked of it quite openly. I was with her when she received the invitation to Glenluce, and she accepted, on condition that I should accompany her. She bought me some pretty new frocks, the finest I had ever had, and we arrived at this castle for the first time together.

"I remember how we entered the drawing-room that evening. I, behind Helen, carrying her scent-bottle and fan. Helen was twenty-one just the day before. She sailed into the room like a swan. She had a long white throat, and she had a graceful way of turning her head about upon it and looking down on each side with a superior sort of air, that made people feel for the moment as if they liked to be looked down upon. I remember perfectly her exquisite appearance—I saw her in an opposite mirror—as we entered, with her beautiful head on one side, and my little ugly face peeping out from behind her white shoulder. For I was a very ugly child, my dear, just at that time. I grew up better afterwards, and astonished everybody. But I was a very ugly child at that time.

"Judith Blake was sitting just a little behind the old lady's chair. I thought on the instant 'what a handsome face!' But that was one second before she looked up and saw Helen. Then a strange expression, which I soon grew familiar with, came over mouth and eyes. I resolved on the instant to keep out of her way so long as I should remain in the place.

"Well, my dear, I need not go on giving you a whole history of the family. From the first there was enmity between Helen and Judith Blake. Helen could be very haughty and slighting to people who did not appreciate her, and there were some who knew that Judith had private reasons of her own for disliking the stranger, without the additional provocation of

being treated with contempt. And I must say that Helen did treat her badly. Judith upon her side did not make much show of ill-will. There was nothing very noticeable in her manner, except sometimes that look, of which, I think, she could hardly have been conscious, or she would have made some effort to hide it. But no one who had ever seen it was likely to forget it.

"My dear, this is not a nice history, and you will be glad when I bring it to an end. Sir John and Helen became engaged. They arranged it one day whilst out riding. Judith was to have gone with them; but Helen's horse was found to be sick, and Judith's was required for Helen. The lovers were caught in a thunderstorm, and arranged their little affair while taking shelter in some romantic and out-of-the-way spot. Helen caught a cold, and was put to bed when she reached home. The news of the engagement was not kept secret for a moment. Sir John told his mother without delay, and the old lady was too pleased to keep the matter to herself. We all knew what had happened when we sat down to dinner without Helen. We were all very merry, except Judith. I should have thought she, too, was ill, only I knew she had looked dark all day, on account of the horse. Dark about the eyes and mouth, and pale, as she always looked when anything had crossed her.

"Helen was ill with a sort of fever for two or three days after this. Margaret and I used to sit in her room all day, reading, or chatting, and telling stories over the fire. Dear Margaret was quite a child then. Sir John used to come to the door to ask how the patient did, and we used to have to go out and comfort him in the lobby. Judith, to our surprise, also came once or twice, and on one occasion, when we assured her Helen was asleep, she came into the room, and stood between us looking down at the fire. It was late in the evening, and Margaret had in her hand a goblet of sweet drink, a dark-looking red stuff, made of some kind of preserves steeped in water. She was walking on tip-toe to place it on a table by the bed.

"'What is that?' asked Judith.

"'Some drink for the night,' said Margaret. 'She is so thirsty.'

"'Will she drink all that?' asked Judith.

"'Every drop of it,' whispered Margaret, and put her finger on her lip and looked at Judith, before she turned and stepped away on her toes across the room.

"Judith Blake did not like dear Margaret. She did not like me, but I think she liked me better than Margaret. She was not afraid of me, for I was afraid of her, and I saw that she did not like being observed. I had always kept out of her way as much as I was able. But dear Margaret was not afraid of her, and was quite too wise and too quick, and kept her bright eyes a great deal too wide open—was altogether too fearless and straightforward to suit with the disposition of Judith Blake.

"My dear, I slept in Helen's room that night. She was restless, and fancied to have me. A bed was arranged for me on a couch in a corner. In the middle of the night I wakened, I knew not why, nor how—unless it had been the strangeness of the room—for there was no noise. But I saw Judith Blake crossing the floor. She was covered all down with something dark, and she made no more sound than if she had been a ghost. I first saw the dark figure, and knew not what it was, and should have screamed, I dare say, but for the fear of wakening Helen. But the next moment a little blaze sprang up in the slumbering fire, and I saw that Judith Blake was in the room. She stepped back behind the bed-curtains till the little blaze dropped down again; and then I saw again only the dark figure moving across the room to the door. The door opened and closed, and she was gone.

"My dear, I thought it odd, but the matter did not keep me awake. I got up in the morning early, as I was accustomed to do. Helen was sleeping soundly, which was not usual with her at that hour. It was my habit to pay her a visit the first thing when I was dressed, and I always had found her awake and rather fretful. I also noticed as unusual that only a little had been taken from the tumbler of sweet drink by her side.

"I went out to the gardens. I was always fond of a garden, even in winter time. Just in the beech-alley, my dear—you know the beech-alley?—I met Judith Blake walking up and down. She had a shawl over her head, and looked pale and unwell. I had forgotten till that moment about seeing her the night before in Helen's room. I felt a little oddly, recollecting it; but she spoke to me very civilly, and asked for Lady Helen. I said I believed she was better. She was sleeping very soundly. Judith recoiled from me a step, and gave me one of those strange bad looks, of which I think she was unconscious. Then she passed on, and so did I, in the opposite direction. And I thought, as I ran along, 'How she does hate Helen!'

"After breakfast it was found that Helen still slept. Lady Munro desired Margaret and me to go out and take a walk; and we went, and took a walk. Even then my dear Margaret had a taste for going poking among the cottages. And I admit to you, my dear, that I admired her, and loved her for it, as I do to this day, only Helen don't see the good of it.

"We were out all the long, long morning, and when we arrived at home Lady Munro came to meet us in the hall. She laid hold of my hand and brought me with her up to her own private room—the room in which she was accustomed to see the steward and the housekeeper, and any of the tenantry who might desire to have an interview with her ladyship. I was frightened out of my senses. I had broken a little ornament the day before. Margaret had assured me it did not matter, that she would make it all right with her mother.

But Lady Munro was a little severe, though kind, and I was sure she was going to lecture me about her precious bit of china.

"She seated herself sternly, and placed me standing before her. Who had been in Helen's room the night before, after Margaret had placed the glass of drink by her side? Who? Sir John had come to the door. That was nothing. And a servant had been in to arrange the fire for the night. Had she approached near the bed? No. Had no one else been in after Margaret and Miss Blake had gone away? I now knew that her ladyship had been questioning Margaret. What could it mean? I hesitated. What difference would it make if I announced Judith's midnight visit?

"'You hesitate,' said her ladyship, 'Did any one else come into the room before you slept?'

"I said, 'No—but——' I was very much afraid, my dear. I saw there was something wrong, and I was terrified at being forced to tell of Judith.

"'But what?' said Lady Munro, so dreadfully that I began to shake and to speak on the instant. I confided to her that Miss Blake had been in the room during the night.

"'That will do. It is what I feared,' said her ladyship, and she did not faint, though I stretched out my arms, seeing her totter in her chair. She steadied herself, however, by grasping both its sides, and remained so sitting, as pale and as fixed as the image upon a tomb; so long that I ventured to touch her at last, and to ask if she were well.

"She said, 'Yes, yes, child; you may go away now. Remember, you are to say nothing about this.'

"My dear, the secret oozed out, though I did as I was bidden, and her ladyship thought to keep it to herself. Helen had slept so long that Lady Munro had become alarmed, had seen something unnatural in the heaviness of the slumber. She then examined the drink that remained in the tumbler by her side. It was drugged with laudanum, enough to have killed her, if dear Helen had but happened to swallow it all. I saw Lady Munro go up the stairs to Judith's room that night. My dear, these of yours are her very rooms. I saw her ladyship come in here and shut the door, and it was three long hours before she came out. She came out pale and frozen-looking, as if petrified with horror. She had been very fond of, very good to, Judith Blake. She went straight to her own chamber, and saw no one more that night.

"The secret oozed out. People whispered, and pointed to Judith Blake. The villagers knew it, and the country folks knew it, and Judith Blake seemed to turn into a ghost, so pallid, and grim, and silent did she become. Lady Munro had more of these long interviews with her up in this room, which she rarely left. Wrestling-matches I think they were, from which poor Lady Munro, with all her sternness and resolution, used to come away worsted. One day she got her inveigled into a coach, and drove with her to the little convent beyond the village, where there was a simple mother abbess, renowned for touching people's hearts. This woman is still alive, and in the weakness of her age she shudders at the name of Judith Blake. Helen and I went home, and when Helen returned here as a bride, Judith was gone, and was spoken of no more. Lady Munro was a good woman, and though she banished did not cease to protect her, so long as she needed protection. We heard of her marriage, but afterwards lost sight of her. Helen used to get ill if she was mentioned. Latterly we have heard of her from Sir Archie and Miss Golden. And we make no remark. We are willing to wish her well. Only we like her to keep very far aloof. And now you will understand, my dear, why I have told you this long story. You will understand why Lady Helen is in a panic."

CHAPTER XXIII. VAIN ADVICE.

"It may all have been a mistake, Miss Madge," said Hester, with trembling lips; "the laudanum might have been an accident, and you might have dreamed that you saw her in the room."

"Well, my dear, I have not the least objection to that arrangement. You have heard my little whisper with great patience. You said you would not believe it, and you keep your word. Only one thing you shall promise me, that you will never forget it. If Lady Humphrey bids you do anything you will bring this to mind before you obey her. If she forbids you to do anything, you will recall my little story before you quite make up your mind that you would not like to disobey her. You see, my dear, I never was a genius, and I have a crazy way of my own. But I have a little knack of looking into things. I know what you are, and I know what Judith Humphrey is. And I believe she has not been kind to you for nothing."

And Miss Madge poked the fire, and the shadows resumed their gambols.

"God bless you, my dear," she said, solemnly, putting her hand on Hester's head with an air of real tragedy oddly mingled with the grotesque. "And believe me I have not pained you to furnish play for an idle tongue. I have done it for the best, my dear, I have done it for the best."

She went away. Hester sat alone, gazing stupidly round the room with such a distraught look on her face, that the shadows, if they were heeding, must have pitied her. That hard pale face, well remembered by Hester, described by Miss Madge, was watching her suspiciously from every dusky corner. Yet she clung to her determination not to believe Miss Madge's story. Had it been anything less dreadful she might have allowed herself to think about it. But the tale was too wild. Lady Humphrey had been the victim of circumstances. A child, and a child with a fantastic brain like Miss

Madge's, was the only witness against her. Against her who was watching over the fortunes of this house at this moment. Poor Lady Humphrey! It was this sorrow of her youth that had made her hard and cold. How would it be with her, Hester, at this moment, did Miss Golden get some laudanum by mistake, and were she to be accused of having given it to her? Then Hester put her hands to her face in shame at the parallel her thoughts were thus drawing between the position in which she found herself in the castle at this moment, and that of Judith Blake in the times long ago. She wondered, with a frightened wonder that did not dare to dwell upon the thought, if Sir John had troubled Judith as his son had troubled her. And then she flew off to assure herself of how gladly she, in her sad old age, would watch over the fortunes of a son of Sir Archie.

Then she thought of all the letters she had written to Lady Humphrey, and the urgent anxious letters which she had received from Lady Humphrey in return. Only for the secresy so constantly recommended in those letters, Hester would have made up her mind to enlighten Miss Madge as to the real state of Lady Humphrey's feelings. But patience for a little and all would be seen. Lady Humphrey's good service must be known some day, and all prejudice and mistakes cleared away. Then they would thank her, Hester, for her silence and her diligence. And Miss Madge would be ashamed of her little whisper. For it never for one moment occurred to this ignorant Hester, that the woman could make other than a friendly use of her knowledge. Had she not been so scrupulously obedient to Lady Humphrey, and given Miss Madge never so delicate a hint, that lady might have enlightened her with another little whisper. But a thousand little whispers must now have come too late. Hester's mischief was already quite accomplished.

A few days after this Hester was sitting at her window, the inevitable needle in her hand. She could see the tracks of raving streams that desolated the valleys, the smoke of cottages, the rainy fields, the wilder weeping peat-moss stretching in long red miles, the brown grandeur of upland moors, and the vivid purple of heathery crags, peeping out of the swathing vapours. She could see the gathering of mists and the mustering of clouds, and the wrestling of a fiery sunset with wintry chills and shadows. There was a gloom over the glens, and there was a gloom over the castle. Lady Helen talked no more about little Christmas festivities.

Miss Madge came weeping into Hester's tower-room. Miss Madge, weeping. The sight was so strange that Hester knew not what dreadful thing to imagine. She let fall her needle and arose, and stood timidly before the poor lady, begging with her eyes to be allowed to offer sympathy.

"My dear," said Miss Madge, "seat yourself. It is nothing which need trouble you. But it is woe and death to thousands in this unhappy country. Our fleet has been scattered and lost. Our fleet from France, which we have expected."

"We!" Hester repeated, mechanically, with an accent of terror.

"Yes, we," said Miss Madge. "My dear, I thought you understood that I was a rebel. I am a rebel. I do not deny it. I do not wish to conceal it, except as far as may be prudent for the safety of this household. My dear, I am not afraid that you will betray us."

"Oh, Miss Madge!" said Hester.

"There will be danger enough on all sides presently," said Madge. "We must all be careful for the sake of our friends. For me, I am ready to give my life; but not to give the lives of those I love. Remember, my dear, that you are not a rebel. You are English, and the king will protect you. Terrible days are coming, and Irish blood will flow. Remember, my dear, that you are not a rebel."

Christmas came and went, and the spring advanced. Larks began to sing, and the sun to laugh in the rivers. The long brown sides of the mountains basked in the returning warmth, and the crags that had frowned all winter seemed to unbend their brows and smile as the little gold clouds floated over their heads. The heavy grey furrows were smoothed from the face of the sea, and the airy waves brought the blue of heaven to the shore. Cottage doors began to be opened fearfully, and anxious faces looked into the sunshine and brightened with passionate hope. Affliction ought surely to follow the threatening of the storm, and the mourning of the rain, and depart out of the land, and be forgotten. So gay a spring-tide could never smile on death and torture. So benignant a sun could not shed its benediction upon outrage. The singing of the birds, and the voices of the children at their play in the newly budded woods, must chase the phantom of terror from the world.

This was a dream, and only simple people indulged in it. Poor mothers who knew no better, and whose aching eyes would fain have seen dungeons open, and their sons coming back to them, even with the mark of the bitter scourge or the scars of cruel burning on their flesh; tender children, who held the robbing of a bird's nest to be an act undeserving of forgiveness; and desperate men, who had nerved their strong arms to strike one blow which should sweep misery and degradation from their homes for evermore.

Only a dream. The spring ripened and mellowed into summer. The rivers might laugh, but men had decreed that they should run red with blood before the touch of another winter should bind them round their rocks. The sunshine might lie softly on the snug yellow thatches, and the pigeons might coo about the chimneys, but the homesteads so tenderly fostered must crumble into ashes, the flames of their destruction must make the stars grow pale.

For the world must see a nation, spoiled of its strength, like Samson blind and shorn, led out to make a spectacle for its masters.

LEAVES FROM THE MAHOGANY TREE.

ECCENTRICITIES OF COOKS.

A CERTAIN marquis of the time of Louis Quatorze (is there anything that those marquises did not do?) invented a musical spit, which only moved to the genteelest of tunes, such as Water Parted from the Sea, and The Minuet in Ariadne. Even Tony Lumpkin's friend, the proprietor of the dancing bear, would have appreciated the foresight and good nature of the epicurean marquis who wished to maintain harmony among his cooks. The fish simmered in six-eight time; the impatient fries hissed to an allegro; the ponderous roasts circled gravely "spirituoso e con expressione;" the stews blended their essences to solemn anthems. The snowy-garbed cooks bore up the dishes in rhythmical steps—the very marmitons tripped in cadence from stove to stove. All was melody and order; the ears were gratified at the same moment that the nose was regaled and the palate satisfied. The gathering so many pleasures into one grand bouquet was an idea worthy of Apicius himself. Why Béchamel, his Majesty's maître d'hôtel, did not carry this great thought further we do not know; but, possibly, the turnspits, with their bandy legs and stolid persistence, may have been preferable to the barrel organ, with its dreary mechanism of sound. But then Béchamel invented an immortal sauce, and the search for that must have taken up half his life, and left no time for lesser cares.

Only one great cook, as far as we know, ever destroyed himself from a fanatical love of his profession. Robert was a great chef, but he did not imitate Brutus; Beauvilliers simmered away his life over charcoal fires, but he never leaped down a coal pit to rival Curtius; Carême was daring in the invention of side dishes, but he never joined the Imperial Guard at Waterloo to devote himself to death like Decius, for a mere abstract idea. This honour of martyrdom was reserved alone for that eminent disciple of St. Laurence, Vatel, the maître d'hôtel of the hero of Rocroi—the great Condé himself. The story has been often told, yet seldom told at length. Repeated from mouth to mouth, without reference to the best original authorities, it has become like a coin, duller, fainter, and blunter with every hand it has passed through. Correctly told, it is a singular example of temporary insanity, caused by the sudden excitement of one uncontrolled idea, and by a paroxysm of wounded pride. Madame de Sévigné relates the event with a strong sympathy for the poor enthusiast. Louis the Fourteenth had long promised a visit to the old general at Chantilly, but had postponed it from time to time, fearing to cause Condé trouble by the sudden influx of a gay and numerous retinue. We have, too, a shrewd suspicion that the old palace at Chantilly had grown rather mouldy, and that the life led there had become grave, methodical, and, perhaps, a trifle dull. The king, however, finally, screwed up his courage and went. The plumes of the laughing courtiers brushed the cobwebs off the old doorways, and impatient hands pushed back the dingy tapestries from rusty doors long unopened. The king arrived on a Thursday; the collation was served in a room hung with jonquils. All was as could be wished. Vatel was in full feather; but at supper, many persons coming who had not been expected, the roast was wanting at several tables. This struck the faithful servant to the heart. It seemed to him an imputation on his master, the great captain; a brand of disgrace for ever. He would be pointed at in Paris and sneered at in Vienna. He was heard to say several times, "I am dishonoured; I am dishonoured; this is a disgrace that I cannot endure."

Vatel had evidently been long overworking his brain. He had been thinking of nothing for weeks but how to make the king's visit a success, his reception worthy of the grandeur, fame, and hospitality, of the prince his master. He said to his friend Gourville, "My head is dizzy, I have not slept for twelve nights; pray assist me in giving orders." The roast being wanting at the inferior tables was the one idea now tyrannising over his mind. Gourville, alarmed, told the prince; the prince, with all the kindness of his nature, went himself instantly to the chamber of Vatel, and said to him,

"Vatel, all is going on well; nothing could equal the supper of the king."

Vatel replied, "Monseigneur, your goodness overpowers me; but the roast was wanting at two tables."

"Nothing of the sort, Vatel; nonsense," said Condé. "Do not distress yourself; all is going well."

But Vatel's regret was not to be appeased. Night came; alas! the fireworks failed—wheels, stars, rockets—all, sixteen thousand francs' worth. This also, no doubt, distressed Vatel. The faithful fellow was restless. He rose at four next morning, determined to attend to everything in person. Never again should the roast be wanting at even the fifth table of the Condé's hall. To his mortification and disgust, everybody was asleep—steward, undercooks, scullions, even the turnspits—fools, pigs, abominations — no one with a thought, no one with a care for the roast and the boiled. At the courtyard gate he meets one of the mere serfs, a purveyor with two straw-bound packages of fish—mille tonneres! only two, and three hundred or so guests. "Is this all?" says Vatel, who has sent to a dozen seaports. The drowsy purveyor, horribly tired with everything that tends to early rising, especially supplies of fish, replies carelessly, "Yes, monsieur," believing Vatel to refer to Calais or Dieppe, or wherever the two baskets had come from. Vatel waited at the gates for an hour, no other purveyors

came. His brain began to turn; there would be not enough fish—a second and deeper disgrace. First day, not meat enough; second day, only fish enough for the king. The prince would be indignant. The joke in Paris would be, Vatel is trying to save the prince the price of two red mullets a month. Better death than that. Then a sneering inner voice whispers inside his tormented brain, "The man who cannot feast a king and his retinue does not deserve to live." His hand falls by accident on his rapier hilt; yes, yes, there is the solution. He finds Gourville, and says to him, in a flushed, excited way, "Monsieur, I shall never survive this disgrace." Gourville makes light of it. Vatel strides up stairs, between the rooms full of sleeping men, and locks the door; he draws his rapier, places it against the door, throws himself on it once, twice, then through the heart, and falls dead in a pool of his own blood. Presently the sun rises, the light widens, the fish comes pouring in, the purveyors are loud at the outer gate. Vatel is wanted to distribute it, to cull the soles, to select the turbots. They run up to his room; they knock, they dash at the door, they break it in. There, lies the faithful cook, with the blood weltering from his gaping wounds. They hurry, and tell Condé. He is deeply affected. The prince relates to the king what has passed, with deepest sorrow. Vatel's death was attributed to the high sense of honour he had, after his own way. He was highly commended: some praising, a few blaming, his fanaticism. The king confessed to Condé that he had delayed coming to Chantilly for five years, dreading the trouble and embarrassment such a visit might occasion.

M. Grimaud de la Reynière, in a dedicatory epistle to the shade of Vatel the great captain's devoted servant, in the last volume of the amusing Almanach des Gourmands, says: "Who was ever more worthy of the respect and gratitude of true gourmands than the man of genius who would not survive the dishonour of the table of the great Condé, and who immolated himself with his own hands because the sea-fish had not arrived some hours before it was wanted? So noble a death insures you, venerable shade, the most glorious immortality! You proved that the fanaticism of honour can exist in the kitchen as well as in the camp, and that the spit and the saucepan have also their Catos and their Deciuses."

Times have changed; French cooks now prefer living on their masters to dying for them. "The glorious suicide," as Reynière calls it, is not often imitated now. The great desire of noblemen's cooks in this present century seems to be to teach their masters great moral lessons by remorseless waste, extravagance, and peculation, to wean them from the fatal error of "plunging" into the bottomless pits of bankruptcy and disgrace. Yet we must not be bitter, for the world was always troubled with servants, who tried to rival their masters in their pride and folly, imitating the vices only of the order whom they served, and forgetting the simpler virtues of their own. The Prince de Soubise (inventor of a sauce, the discovery of which was more glorious than twenty victories) rejoiced in a cook of large views, economy being ("son moindre défaut") his least weakness. The prince intending to give a magnificent supper to all the beauty and wit of Paris, requested Bertrand to draw up a menu, a sort of rough estimate; for the prince was like our Chancellors of the Exchequer, rather a hypocrite in his affectation of economy. He wanted, however, to persuade himself and friends that he was anxious to save. The chef's estimate had no hypocrisy about it; it was sublimely reckless. The first hypothesis was,

"*Fifty hams!*"

"What, what! Fifty hams!" spluttered the prince: "why, Bertrand, your brains are surely like your spits, they are turning. Are you going to feast the whole army of the Rhine?"

Bertrand was blandly contemptuous. "No, monseigneur, only one ham will appear upon the table; but the rest are indispensable for my espagnoles, my blonds, my garnishes, my——"

"Bertrand, you are plundering me!" stormed the prince. "This article shall not pass."

Bertrand's blood was up. "My lord," he said, sternly, "you do not understand the resources of our art. Give the word, and those poor fifty hams which so perturb you, why, ma foi, I will melt them all down into one little glass bottle no bigger than my thumb."

The prince was abashed by the genius of the spit, and the fifty hams were purchased.

Ude, cook at Crockford's, speaking from vast experience, says on this subject, in his book: "The chief fault of all great people's cooks is that they are too profuse in their preparations. Suppers are often only ridiculous proofs of the extravagance and bad taste of the givers." Then Crockford's right hand goes on to allude to the shameful waste he had witnessed at Lord Sefton's and other great houses, and which seems even to have weighed on his seared conscience, as if every wasteful party had been a distinct crime. His description makes us shudder, when we picture to ourselves outside the area rails, and behind the mews of those very houses, the pale pinched faces of starving needlewomen, beggar children, and bedridden old people, to whom meat once a week is a gift that seems sent from Heaven.

"I have known," the shrewd and sagacious old cook says (he had been cook to the bankrupt Duke of York, and ought to have known something of heartless extravagance); "I have known balls where, the next day, in spite of the pillage of a pack of footmen, which was enormous, I have really seen twenty or thirty hams, *one hundred and fifty or two hundred carved fowls* (four shillings each?), and forty or fifty tongues, given away! Jellies melted on all the tables; pastry, pâtés, aspics, and lobster salads, all heaped up in the kitchen and strewed about the passages, completely disfigured by the manner in which it was necessary to take them from the dishes in which they had

been served! And this extravagance had been of use to no human being, for even the servants would not consider it a legitimate repast were they obliged to dine on the remains of a former day's banquet. Footmen are like cats; they take a fancy only to what they steal, but are indifferent about what is given them."

Now, these bitter and remorseful remarks open up a really important and interesting subject. What should be done with the broken meats of a great household? The cook's desire, of course, is to toss all spare mutton chops, touched but not eaten, all flaps of beef and squarings of joints, into the wash-tubs to swell their iniquitous and, too often, thievish profits. Half tongues, ends of legs of mutton, remainders of rounds of beef, will, of course, go to their prowling lovers (if they be young and unmarried), and if old, and with husbands out of the house, into their husband's pockets. The real honest relics of a nobleman's kitchen would at least feed four or five poor families a week. The usual objection is, that it is somewhat demoralising to feed the poor on dainties; but we reply, that the proper leavings of a well-managed household would be very useful to the poor to mix with their simpler and less nourishing food, and that such gifts of mercy (to hospitals, infirmaries, and almshouses) would be twice blest. As for the perishable residues of poulterers, butchers, and fishmongers, they ought to be sold cheap to street traders and to the poor at recognised rates, and at certain hours; for either to bury or destroy such food rather than practise such charity is wilfully to add a pitch to poverty.

To return to less serious matters. The Duke of Orleans, whose petits soupers at the Palais Royal shed lustre on a spot that even its subsequent infamy could hardly efface, had a cook who is said, according to Mr. Hayward, to have excelled in a dindon aux truffes.

That miserable voluptuary Egalité, equally dainty in his food and ostentatious in his hospitality, came over to England to see his estimable contemporary, teaching his fat friend with his own plump fingers to cook cutlets and fish in certain recherché modes unknown in the outer barbarian world. Could imagination picture a more typical scene—Philip (drunk) teaching George (drunker) how to cook cutlets. The future monarchs of two great nations, in a time of volcanic turbulence, and the strange swift growth of novelties, standing over a charcoal stove discussing the frying of a cutlet and the stuffing of a fricandeau! Is it possible to conceive millions of brave and wise men governed by two gross dull creatures, who had not intellect enough to have carried on a city eating-house even in partnership? Arcades ambo, indeed, et nobile fratrum!

Our old Iron Duke, grim as he was, liked a good dinner; for in his youth he had been a dandy, a rake, and a bon vivant. Lord Seaford finding Felix, an eminent French cook, too expensive for him, allowed the duke to transplant him to Apsley House.

Some months after, a friend of Lord Seaford's observed that Felix's dishes still prevailed upon my lord's table.

"So you've got the duke's cook to dress your dinner?"

"Not the duke's, but mine," replied Lord S. "Felix is no longer the duke's cook. The poor fellow came back with tears in his eyes, and begged me to take him back, reduced wages or no wages at all, for he could not stay any longer at Apsley House. 'Had the duke turned rusty'? was my natural inquiry. 'O no, my lord,' replied Felix; 'he is the kindest and most liberal of masters; but I serve him a dinner that would make a Ude or Francatelli burst with envy, and he say nothing. I go into ze country, and leave him to try a dinner ill cooked by a stupid dirty cookmaid, and again he say nothing. It's dat, it's dat hurt my feeling, milor.'"

We are not sure but that Felix, in adverse circumstances, might have sacrificed himself as bravely as Vatel. Felix was a man who would have gloried in the King of Hanover's plan of printing on the carte the name of the cook by whom each dish was dressed. Nor would he, though greedy of fame, have disliked the princely custom at the table of the Regent Orleans, of each guest slipping a piece of gold into every dish of more than ordinary merit.

Carême, one of the greatest of French cooks, first became eminent by inventing an appetising sauce for maigre days. He then devoted several years to the study of roasting, in all its branches; he next mastered sauces and belles parties des froids; and, lastly, he studied design and elegance under the accomplished Robert l'Ainé. His career was one of victory after victory. He nurtured the Emperor Alexander; kept alive Talleyrand through that long disease, his life; fostered Lord Londonderry, and delighted the Princess Bagration. An unworthy salary of one thousand pounds a year induced him to become chef to the Regent, but he left Carlton House in a very few months. While in the onerous position of pampering the Regent, it is said that aldermen gave enormous prices for stale pâtés that had been already served at the royal table. Tempting offers were made to Carême to return. The Regent was positively inconsolable.

"No," said the true patriot, "my soul is French, and can only exist in France."

Carême, therefore, overcome by his feelings, at once accepted an unprecedented salary from Baron Rothschild, and settled in Paris.

Lady Morgan, dining at the baron's villa, in 1829-30, has left a sketch of a dinner of Carême's in her lightest and happiest manner. It was a very sultry evening, but the baron's dining-room stood apart from the house, and was shaded by orange trees. In the oblong pavilion of Grecian marble, refreshed by fountains, no gold or silver dazzled and heated the eye, but porcelain, beyond the price of all precious metals—every plate a picture—imparted a general character of sumptuous simplicity. There was no

perruque in the dinner, no high spiced sauce, no dark brown gravy, no flavour of cayenne and allspice, no tincture of catsup and walnut pickle, no visible agency of those vulgar elements of cooking of the good old times, fire and water. Distillations of the most delicate viands had been extracted in silver dews with chemical precision. Every meat presented its own aroma, every vegetable its own shade of verdure. The mayonnaise was fried in ice, like Ninon's description of Sevigné's heart, "une citrouille frite à la neige." The tempered chill of the Plombière (which held the place of the eternal fondue and soufflets of our English tables) anticipated the stronger shock, and broke it, of the exquisite Avalanche, which, with the hue and odour of fresh gathered nectarines, satisfied every sense and dissipated every coarser flavour. With less genius than went to the composition of that dinner men have written epic poems.

Comparing Carême with the great Beauvilliers of No. 20, Rue Richelieu, the greatest restaurant cook in Paris from 1782 to 1815, a great authority on the matter says, rivalling Dr. Johnson's celebrated parallel, "There was more à plomb in the touch of Beauvilliers, more curious felicity in Carême's; Beauvilliers was great in an entrée, and Carême sublime in an entremet; we would bet Beauvilliers against the world for a rôt, but should wish Carême to prepare the sauce were we under the necessity of eating an elephant or our grandfather."

Napoleon, who ate whenever he was hungry, day or night, was a torment to his cook, who had always to keep cutlets and roast chickens ready for the sudden and irregular hurricanes of his appetite. His maître d'hôtel Durand, however, had been a celebrated cook, and knew how to meet his master's gusts of temper when affairs went wrong. One day Napoleon returned from the Council of State sullen and moody. He had eaten nothing since daybreak, events had run counter to his iron will. A dejéuner à la fourchette was served up. He had hardly lifted his knife and fork when in a whirlwind of rage he dashed the table, plates, dishes, all to the ground, and then paced the room like a caged tiger. Durand looked on, calm as a statue, and gave orders to his staff to remove the débris of china and meat. In a few minutes more an exact counterpart of the déjeuner appeared, and Durand quietly announced it by the customary "Sa Majesté est servie." Napoleon was softened by Durand's tact: "Merci bien, mon cher Durand, merci," he said, with a smile, and sat down with restored enjoyment.

But a cook of that great gastronome, the Cardinal Fesch, showed even more adroitness by his ingenious way of gaining his master a credit for magnificence and hospitality. His Eminence had been presented on the morning of a feast with two turbots of singular size and beauty. The cardinal was most anxious to have the credit of both. The chef promised that both should appear, that both should enjoy the reception which was their due. The dinner came; a turbot entered to relieve the soup. Two attendants came to carry the turbot to the carver, but one of them missed his footing and rolled over the turbot. The cardinal turned pale, a deep silence prevailed. At that moment the head cook advanced and said with grand composure to his retinue, "Bring in another turbot." The second enormous turbot was then borne in to the astonishment and delight of the alarmed guests.

Louis Eustache Ude was one of the most eccentric of celebrated cooks. He had been twenty years purveyor to the Earl of Sefton. He had also been maître d'hôtel to the Duke of York, who delighted in his anecdotes and his mimicry. His mother was a milliner, who had married an underling in the kitchen of Louis the Sixteenth. He ran away from home, and became alternately a jeweller, an engraver, a printer, a haberdasher, a commercial traveller, an actor, and an agent on 'Change. He was then two years cook to Madame Letitia Bonaparte, and on leaving her became chef to the Earl of Sefton, at a salary of three hundred pounds per annum, eventually receiving a pension of one hundred pounds a year from the liberal nobleman. In his work on cooking, Ude announced himself as the only person who had ever written with accuracy on the great art.

Colonel Damer one day found Ude walking up and down at Crockford's in a great rage, and asked what was the matter.

"Matter, ma foi; you saw that man just gone out? Well, he ordered red mullet for his dinner. I made him a delicious little sauce with my own hands. The mullet was marked on the carte two shillings; I added sixpence for the sauce. He refuses to pay the sixpence. The imbecile: he seems to think that red mullets come out of the sea with my sauce in their pockets."

Ude was succeeded at Crockford's by the accomplished Francatelli, who alternately had been chef at Chesterfield House, at Lord Kinnaird's, and at the Melton Club. The Earl of Errol then obtained him the post of maître d'hôtel to our amiable Queen, but at the end of two years he was displaced by some household cabal.

Let us close with a solemn advice to all true Amphitryons. The man who wishes to make his table famous must make a friend of his French cook. He must watch over his health with untiring and tender vigilance. A physician should be called in the moment a cloud rises on the brow of the man of mind. The profession of a cook is one of fatigue and of danger, and we must honour those who undergo these dangers; for money alone can never recompense them. The acrid vapours of the stoves undermine in time even the most robust constitution; the fury and glare of the fire are injurious to the lungs, the liver, and the eyes; the smoke hurts the vision and injures the complexion. The professed cook lives in the midst of dangers as a soldier lives amid storms of shot or

shell, but with this difference, that the cook's combats are unceasing, and without glory; for the name of the most admirable cook is, alas! unknown by half the guests who frequent his master's table. An eminent cook should be seen daily by his physician—that is the dictum of a great gastronomic authority, De la Reynière himself, who says: "Tasting is indispensable in the practice of cooking. The fingers of a good cook must be incessantly travelling up to his mouth, for it is only by incessantly tasting his ragoûts that he can accurately determine their seasoning. His palate must therefore possess the extremest delicacy, so that the merest trifle may stimulate it, and warn him of his faults. If his palate be blunted his sense of taste is injured. Many things contribute to blunt and pervert the sense—the continual smell of the stove, the necessity of drinking constantly beer and wine (and those often bad) to cool a burning throat." By degrees the sense of taste loses its tact, fineness, and exquisite sensibility, and by degrees becomes dull as the conscience of an old attorney. The only way to restore this lost flower, and to renew its pliancy and delicacy is medical treatment. It is necessary, then, whatever resistance your cook may offer, to often hand him over to the doctor. The moment his ragoûts are too salt, too hot, to the doctor with him without mercy. His palate has lost its sensibility; it must be renewed by means of acid drugs, and minerals, and the searching infusions of bitter herbs. All great cooks submit to such treatment without a murmur. It is a tacit part of their engagement. Those who kick at it are not born for greatness; the indifference to true glory irrefutably proves them underlings, and they will slowly but surely sink into sellers of potatoes, herrings, wine, and small coal.

WALKS AND TALKS WITH THE PEOPLE.

NO. III. THE BROKEN SERGEANT.

It is not often in my walks that I am induced to parley with professional tramps, young or old. Lying is so much their trade and habit that it becomes part of their nature, from their earliest youth, and is as ineradicable from the constitution of their minds, as hatred of work is from the constitution of their bodies. Whether they be indigenous or foreign, Anglo-Saxons or gipsies, they are all, as far as my experience extends, alike in their falsehood and laziness. They take the curse pronounced upon Adam at the Fall, in its literal exactness, and look upon labour with invincible repugnance. A great hulking vagabond of this class looked over my garden-gate one day last summer, and catching sight of me, began immediately a doleful story of his hunger and misery. There was a considerable pile of fire-wood in the yard that required sawing and splitting. I pointed it out to him, and said:

"Do a good day's work at *that*, and I will pay you a good day's wages." He looked at me dubiously as if he were not quite sure whether I was in jest or in earnest. At last he inquired,

"How much?"

"Well," I replied, "five shillings for the job, and take your own time to it." He might have done it in a day, or if he had worked very leisurely, in a day and a half. He took a little time to consider, and said at last,

"I'll try; I'll *show* willing!"

"*Show* willing! what do you mean? Why not *be* willing?"

"Well, I'll *be* willing, but I'm so weak and hungry, that I can't work until I've had something to eat. Not a mouthful of food has passed my lips since yesterday morning. Give me sixpence on account, and I'll get a breakfast, and come back and work like a man." I shook my head. "Well," he replied, "let me have twopence."

I was all but certain that if I gave him the twopence I should see no more of him; but as an experiment, and with a kind of forlorn and shadowy hope that he might not be the incorrigible vagabond that he looked, I let him have the money. As I anticipated, he returned no more. The loss of the twopence did not offend my amour propre, but I had occasion during the ensuing fortnight to regret that I had parted with it so easily. It brought a plague of tramps upon me. On the heels of that luckless twopence, came ten tramps, where but one had come before. Tramps single, tramps married, or worse; a tramp with two, three, four, and six children, in all varieties of simulated misery. There is, as most of us know, a kind of freemasonry among these people, and they use a system of marks upon door-posts and lintels, invisible to unpractised eyes, but plain enough to those who know where to look for them, to notify whether the master or mistress is good for a penny or for broken victuals, or keeps a savage dog; whether there is the slightest use in making application, and above all, whether the occupier be a "beak." Whether the mark of liberality, or soft heartedness was put on my door, I am unable to say, but if it were, the stern inflexibility in giving nothing, which I exhibited during the whole time that the plague was upon me, must have convinced the "Circuit" that it had been misinformed, as regarded me, and that application at my gate was useless.

There are, however, chance beggars—not regular tramps, who are sometimes met with on the road—and whom it is not difficult to distinguish from the professionals. They do not snivel or cringe so much as the cadgers who adopt the lachrymose style, neither are they so insolent as the sturdy vagrants, who try to carry matters with a high hand when they meet with women or old men in lonely places; but beg with a sort of self-respect, which is very different from the hypocritical whine of the born beggar. Such a one I met with a year and a half ago on his way from London to Aldershot,

and walked with him for a distance of five miles. He was a man in the prime of life, with a military air and bearing; with a handsome beard and moustache, and a face bronzed by exposure to the sun. He wore two medals on the breast of his very ragged and disreputable looking coat, although it scarcely required the proof which these afforded that he had been a soldier. He did not ask me for money; but point blank said he was faint and weary, and would be truly grateful if I would treat him to a glass of beer. There was something so manly, yet respectful, in his tone and manner, that the directness of his request rather pleased me than otherwise; and I told him that as we were going in the same direction I would walk with him and give him a glass at the first road-side inn we came to. He became communicative on the faith of my promise, and told me his history as we went. He was of good parentage, and had received a fair education; but in consequence of pecuniary difficulties in his youth, and of a love affair that had gone badly, he had enlisted in his nineteenth year as a private soldier in a cavalry regiment, and served more than twenty years in India. He had made campaigns under Gough, Havelock, Napier, and Lord Clyde; and had received fourteen wounds in various parts of his body;—one on the breast (he opened his ragged jacket, and showed me the large and ghastly scar); and another on his right shoulder, which had disabled him from every kind of hard work. He was discharged—as an invalid—with an allowance of ninepence a day. Within a week a quarter's pension, amounting to three pounds fourteen shillings and elevenpence, would be due. In the mean time he was penniless, shirtless, almost shoeless, and had it not been for the kindness of a gentleman—who knew him, and who was an ex-director of the old East India Company—he would have been trouserless also. The trousers were a ludicrous misfit, and their girth round the waist was about thrice his circumference; but he folded them over somehow, and intended, at the first convenient opportunity, to try his hand at taking them in, and tailoring them himself.

"When I get my pension," he added, "I shall be able to rig myself out a little better."

I asked him whether, with the education he had received and of which his conversation gave proof, he had risen above the rank of a private soldier.

"Yes," he said, "I was twice a sergeant, and was twice broken and reduced to the ranks, for my besetting sin. I am trying to conquer it, though with very poor success. Drink, sir, has been my ruin. I am striving very hard to reform. For six weeks I have tasted nothing stronger than beer, and very little of that; but that I take as an article of food when I can get it, and not as a stimulant, like gin."

"Why don't you take the pledge? and stick to cold water?"

"It's of no use. I have taken the pledge, and broken it. There are times when I loathe the very smell of liquor, when my stomach revolts at the thought of it; and when I think a cup of good tea or coffee the most delicious drink in the world. At other times a mad desire for gin or rum possesses me. I am unable to resist it. I would lay down my life for it. I feel that I must have it; and that I grow strong, cheerful, even happy, without being actually drunk. On such occasions I am equal to almost any exertion, and become so lavish of my money, that I would share my last sixpence with any poorer devil than myself if I could find one. This fit generally lasts for about a fortnight, and when it passes off, I always find myself a miserable, penniless wretch, weak in body, dejected in mind; and with such a hatred to drink, that if the last barrel of it existing in the world were placed before me to do as I pleased with, I feel that I should knock the bung out and let the poison run into the gutter."

"I think yours is a case for the doctor," said I, "rather than for the teetotallers."

"I don't know that all the doctors in the world could do me any good. It is misery, or rather despair, that impels me to drink now, though when I was in India I drank for the love of drinking. But that is all over; and I think that if I could earn half a crown a-day in addition to my pension, that I should live a regular life. Want of self-control, or self-control exercised only by fits and starts, *that* has been my curse ever since I can remember."

By this time I had given him the promised beer, and a hunk of bread and cold bacon besides at the way-side inn I knew of; and luckily for him I walked with him for a couple of miles further.

"Your education has been above the common average," I said, "and you express yourself as if you had read a good deal. You are still in the prime of life, and if you can't do hard manual work, you can do something—get into the corps of Commissionaires, for instance."

"I have read a good deal, and I think I could fill a respectable position even yet, if I could get out of my present degradation. I can speak Hindustani, and should like to go back to India, not as a soldier, for my wounds and state of health disqualify me; but as a hospital nurse. The gentleman who gave me the trousers has promised to do his best to procure me a situation at Calcutta; but I believe he's rather afraid of me."

"Afraid of you? why?"

"Afraid that I should disgrace his recommendation by getting drunk again; but I have suffered so much misery, and beggary, and cold, hunger, and filth, since I left the army, that if I get into work, and the means of living once more, and lose my chance by drink, I shall deserve to die in a ditch."

"You say you can speak Hindustani. Look at that house," I said, pointing to an elegant mansion, surrounded by park-like grounds on the left-hand side of the road as we passed. "A gentleman, an acquaintance of mine, lives there, who also speaks Hindustani, and passed about thirty years of his life in India. Possibly

if you could find means to tell him your story, he might become interested in you, as I have been, and put you in the way of such a situation as you seek."

"Perhaps," he said; "if I could meet the gentleman, and he were not afraid to be seen talking to such a ragamuffin. But dressed as I am, I could not pass the lodge-gate. The dogs and the servants would both be at me. To be ragged, hungry, and wretched, is a much greater offence in the eyes of servants, than it is in the eyes of their masters. That's my experience. Perhaps it is all right and natural that it should be so. England is overrun with tramps, and I know I look like one; and just now, though it is not always so, I am behaving like one."

The doctrine of Fate and Destiny is not dead in the world. It is by no means peculiar to Buddhists and Mahomedans; and lurks in the corners of many minds, where it ought not to take up its lodging. It so happened, however, whether it were a beneficent fatality for the poor broken sergeant, or an accident, arising out of the "fortuitous concurrence of atoms," that at the very moment at which he uttered these last words, I saw my friend, the East India gentleman, who spoke Hindustani—Major Bhurtampore, I shall call him—coming towards us. The major, worthy man, has a hobby for the Oriental tongues, and especially for Hindustani, and when I, in few words, introduced the sergeant to him, as one who could speak his favourite language, the two were speedily engaged in jabbering it together. The major was delighted. He had not met for more than five years with anybody who could speak Hindustani; and I left him and the sergeant together, and continued my walk alone.

It was a lucky day for the sergeant that he asked me for a pint of beer; it was lucky for him that I was not offended at his request; and luckiest of all that we should have come across Major Bhurtampore as we did. The major, who is a convivial man himself, and likes his old Madeira and Burgundy, was not too severe upon the sergeant's failing; and liked the sergeant all the better perhaps for not concealing it. I learned from the major six months afterwards, that he had given the sergeant a trifle to help him on the road, and to pass the week intervening before he could receive his pension, and that he had exacted from him a solemn promise that he would not taste spirits of any kind, and that he would expend the money in the purchase of a shirt and a decent suit of clothes; and that in respectable trim he would, the day afterwards, present himself at the major's house. The sergeant was true to his word; and the major was so pleased with his punctuality, his improved appearance, and his Hindustani, that he resolved to befriend him in a more substantial manner, and to procure him, if possible, either in England or in India, the situation of hospital nurse, for which he deemed himself best suited. After the lapse of two months, during which the sergeant drank nothing stronger than beer, which the major, remembering his own love for Madeira, did not prohibit, if taken in moderation, the major was successful in procuring him a situation in a military hospital in England. I have heard of the sergeant very recently. He has quite overcome his once uncontrollable love of rum and gin; bears a high character in the hospital for gentleness to his patients, and the careful performance of his duty. Once every quarter, when he gets a holiday to draw his pension, he pays the major a visit. They talk Hindustani together the whole day, and both of them, when they separate, look forward with pleasure to their next merry meeting. The sergeant remains true to his beer. He says that beer brought him luck, and as long as he can get it good, and he can afford himself a pint with his dinner and another half pint with his supper, he shall take the exact allowance and no more. Like Robert Burns, of whose poems he is a diligent student, and one or two of which he has, with the major's assistance, translated into Hindustani, he has learned, but unlike Robert Burns, before it was too late, "that prudent, cautious, self-control, is wisdom's root." And it seems to me that as long as he acts upon that excellent maxim, there is no fear of him.

CANKER IN THE BUD.

There is a small pretty-looking cottage at Leytonstone labelled on the outside, "Children's Home and Laundry," where is now being carried on one of the saddest works of Christian charity that the world has yet seen—work so sad, so painful, so revolting to the whole feeling and nature of humanity, that I scarcely like to speak of it at all. And yet it is but a false modesty which refuses to recognise an existing evil, when such recognition may probably do good, and that would prefer to let a work of positive reformation pass unnoticed rather than undergo the horror of showing its necessity. Wherefore, terrible as the whole subject is, I will tell what I saw when I went down to Leytonstone to look into the working of the children's home—"the Home of the Good Shepherd," where the lambs of the human flock are cared for—the place where tainted children are rescued from a life of pollution—where cankered buds are sought to be made into comely and wholesome flowers. But first the Lady, as she is called by the little ones, the kindly noble-hearted woman who has begun and still carries on this house, shall speak, in her circular letter dated February, 1865.

"There is one very pitiable class for which I now most earnestly entreat your help," she says. "Poor little girls who have been led into habits of impurity; often in entire ignorance of the sin; sometimes through curiosity or self-will. They are too young and too childish to be received into Penitentiaries; too deeply tainted with evil to be admitted into ordinary industrial schools and orphanages. But are we to leave

them to swell the ranks of evil livers—to perish? This is not the will of our Heavenly Father; and must not we, who so often pray 'Thy will be done,' do what we can to rescue them? Within a month of the date of this letter," the second part of the first circular goes on to say, "a very suitable little house, close to my father's gate, became vacant, and was secured for the Children's Home. A Christian woman offered her services as matron, and on the first Sunday in Lent I brought home two children, one twelve years old, from Devonshire farm service; one fourteen years old, from a court in Holborn, both sad cases, for which this special Home was needed. A third, an orphan aged fifteen, was sent here as a temporary inmate, having been turned away in consequence of the gross misconduct of one in the rank of her employers. She quickly got another situation, and I have now six children" (this was February, '65, it must be remembered; at this present date, August, '68, there are twenty); "but one of them, aged twelve, is in King's College Hospital, poor little child! She was left upon the streets of London at six years old, her father forsaking her after her mother's death, and she had lived almost entirely upon the refuse picked up in the streets; so that the diseased state of her body was pitiable. She came to me from Newport Market Refuge. Though she had lived in the midst of evil, she is a dear little thing, and we all wish to have her back again as quickly as possible. These first cases were very urgent ones, so that I could not delay admitting them till the house was repaired and adapted to its new use. As soon as the alterations are completed we shall, I hope, receive sixteen or eighteen, and we shall have the power of spreading into adjoining cottages, if we are enabled to do so."

Another letter, dated Lent, '66, says: "I cannot tell to the public the story of my poor children's sad early lives. I believe I should be almost overwhelmed with help if the awful need could be fully realised. My youngest child is only eight years old. There are several other children under nine years old pressing for admission—must they be left as a prey? I believe this is the only Home open to such very little ones of this class. All the penitentiaries send, or try to send, children — Clewer, Wantage, Ditchingham, East Grinstead, and St. George's, all beg me to receive poor little ones too young for their houses. Very painfully has the pressure for admission proved the necessity for such a shelter. Applications are made from all parts of England, and many are of necessity rejected for lack of space and funds."

This home, so pressingly needed, and so lovingly begun, has hitherto been supported rather by chance scraps than by any settled run of subscriptions. The coal merchant gave two tons of coals; a sugar-baker a constant supply of treacle; a grocer sent them tea; and rice, in the respective quantities of a whole bag, a half bag, and a quarter bag came from different donors. A dying woman in the lady's brother's parish begged her husband to make a supply of three-legged stools, which she hid under her bed, for the Leytonstone Home; and the Lady, in her circular, says: "Most useful they have been, serving, in our early days, as seats, tables, washstands, &c." This man still continues to send them from time to time things which his wife, before her death, told him they would want. Beds and chairs, crockery and clothing, with many money gifts, also came in. The village shop sent them a large contribution of matches, blacklead, &c.; the shoemaker sent a bundle of boots and shoes; the sadler, brushes, and such like articles of his trade, in memory of his eldest girl, once in the Lady's service, and now "sleeping in our churchyard." The baker gave them a flour bin and a cat to drive away the mice; the ironmonger a kitchen fender; some Spanish fowls and bees were sent: all of which gifts were of the utmost value, for the children who go to the Home are of such an age, and for the most part have lived a life of such semi-starvation, that they require abundant food and warm clothing, and the Lady's own small resources were quite exhausted in fitting up the laundry, the real "workshop" of the establishment.

In the laundry, which was anciently a stable—for the Lady is one of those capable shifty people who can make use of anything and transfer functions with the skill of a magician—six or eight young ones, with their teacher, wash by machinery between sixty and a hundred dozen articles, and three or four dozen shirts, in the week; and I can answer for the work being done quite as well as if all the little laundry-maids were full-grown women; and perhaps even a little better; young creatures having naturally an immense pride in doing the work of men and women as well as their elders, consequently taking more pains. This laundry work is "capital work for them," says the Lady, "because it must be done heartily, and thoroughly, and quickly." More than half the washing is for themselves, and so unpaid; the rest is paid for, and provides firing and light for the whole family. They take in needlework also, which helps in the clothing; and some of the inmates provide a little towards their own support; but what is provided does not average a shilling a week for each.

There are now twenty children, four invalids, and four superintendents in this Home. The invalids are taken, not only to do them good by careful nursing and fresh air, but also for the benefit it is to the children to have sick folk about, to whom they may be useful, and for whom they must be gentle, thoughtful, and self-sacrificing. Then there is a dear old-fashioned woman to "grump" at them—kind, and generous, and good, but with just those useful grumpy ways that keep children straight without too much mental hardship—an invaluable part of the training of children, and specially valuable in a home made up of love

that might else be, perhaps, too uniformly kind and courteous. So that the children have every moral and mental element proper for them—the care of the sick; hard, brisk, useful work; discipline; affection; and the due proportion of growling and fault-finding—the salt which keeps all the rest in right condition.

I was specially struck with the look that almost all the children had of having once been starved, though now they were fed up. Some certainly were of that gross and heavy kind which does not show privation, but most were still pale and with that peculiar outline which denotes past emaciation. Some were very bright and intelligent, and others, of course, just as repulsive as these were attractive. One had a face almost like an ape's, with the jerking manner of an ape, a mere low-browed animal who might be kept from evil courses, but who could never be made of much value; a simple human weed, poor child! predoomed to worthlessness at the best, and glad if she might be kept from active evil. One was like a gipsy, who, when she was brought, had a black bonnet profusely trimmed wlth blue ribbons and red strings beneath. She was as wild as a hawk when she first came, and for some time there seemed to be but little chance of getting her into anything like order or discipline. However, after awhile, she was reclaimed from her excessive unrestraint and turbulence, and is now useful and energetic. It was just a direction of power; and her power has at last found a fitting channel. Some are stolid and scarcely to be impressed by anything short of physical force; and some are sensitive, and to be very gently handled and made much of; some are heavy, coarse, and sensual; some pretty, vain, and light; some have the brand of vice upon them even yet; and some have candid childish eyes, as clear as your own little daughter's, and with evidently no enduring mark of evil left upon them. With some you would say, "surely no good can be done here," with others "surely no harm has been done here." Moral lepers are some, whom not all the waters of Jordan could (so it would seem) cleanse of their leprosy; but the patient hope and unwearied love of the Lady meets even the most repulsive cases, and makes good of them. "No one must imagine," she says, "that my family of twenty children, from eight to fifteen years old, is a collection of repulsive unmanageable creatures. I wish those who come often among us, and who employ my children at their own houses, would tell you what they think of their improved appearance and behaviour. I must only say that my first year's work has thoroughly confirmed my feeling, that the best remedial discipline for such children is to be found in a true family life of self-forgetfulness in work and play, rather than in a well-ordered institution. A *well-ordered family* we wish and try to be."

While I was there a lady, with a sharp face, thin lips, and a ready frown, who boasted much of her home cleanliness, and complained bitterly of the want of sympathy and affection shown generally by servants, came to ask for a little maid out of this Home. I could not help contrasting the happy well-ordered lives which these poor little ones have under the Lady, with the buffetings and sour rebukes, the sharp thorns of temper likely to be their lot under such a mistress as this one who now came to ask for a servant of the Lady's training. And yet it must be done! The time must come when these young creatures have to turn out of their nest and try their future with the world; and though the Lady still keeps them in sight, and they still have her as their refuge should they need it, yet they will never know the same sweet home life again; it is their one glimpse into the best condition of humanity, their one hour of peace and place of rest.

A bright little girl of fourteen manages the laundry with all the deftness and precision and care, of a woman of forty; one of seven is the coal, or rather, coke woman—and the poor little mite, thrusting her hand where it had no business to be, got her fingers smashed. The pain was intense but borne bravely; only when her hand was bound up, and she was laid so far on the shelf, she burst into tears, and said sobbing, "But Lady! who will manage my work and break the coke?" One little girl there distinctly remembers her mother taking her to one of the London bridges, and telling her she would throw her over. She remembers her frantic terror as she clung to her neck, while the great black river swirled below, and how she was rescued by a passer by and taken away. When she was told that her mother was dead, her only exclamation was, "Oh she was so cruel to me!" There was no recollection of love, no childish yearning, no tender passion of regret—only the remembrance of that horrible day when she was held over the parapet of the bridge, and threatened with death—only the remembrance of one long ceaseless act of brutal cruelty.

Very sad, almost too sad to think of, are the early lives of some of these poor castaways. There is one, the child of a French woman and an Italian soldier, who was left as a baby in long clothes in a house in Soho, among people of by no means doubtful character. Here she was brought up—dragged up—with the alternative given to her, when she reached eleven years of age, of going on the stage as a ballet girl, or of going on the streets. She was rescued just in time, and before much evil had been wrought in her. But she was rescued only just in time. She is a passionate and self-willed child, but with a conscience in the midst of it all, who has fits of good and evil—alternating impulses—which make her both dangerous and interesting. When her evil fit is on her she turns her little Bible pictures, which she has hung about her bed, with their faces to the wall. At one time she used to take them down and hide them, now she only turns away their faces. She goes to the Lady sometimes and says to her, that she wants to run away, but that she must not let her; that her bad fit is on her, and she wants

to be bad. She knows how to get money, she says, and she will get it as her mother did; and then, by judicious management, the evil hour passes, and she is penitent, self-reconciled, and good. She is a fine-natured little creature, loving, turbulent, impulsive, full of power; but needing to be cared for during the tender years of her life, or she will go to the bad altogether.

One was a little girl, taken at six—not sixteen—from a life of vice; and she, too, often threatens to go back to her old habits, and follow in the steps of her mother. In that frightful house where she lived among her mother's companions, as part scholar part plaything, one of the poor creatures taught her the Lord's Prayer. It was not her own mother, but another woman. Her father was an Oxford pressman; her mother, we already know of what class; and there was this little creature foredoomed to destruction, had it not been for the help of the Lady and the Leytonstone Home. One little stray lamb was the daughter of a woman who had been a good mother while she lived, but who had died and left her to a worthless father. She wore a nightgown for the first time in her remembrance when she came to the Home. A girl of eleven was a confirmed drunkard. She had been brought up by a Quakeress, but something had disgusted her with religion, and she came to the Home a thorough little infidel. She did not come a very long way, but she had beer six times during her journey. Her mother was a real fiend by all accounts, and the girl has inherited some of her passionate propensities. But she too has a conscience which care and education can develop; and she too gives great promise of future good, if only she can be kept in the right way during her first youth. She is not allowed to touch beer now, for even yet the love of drink still lingers in her, and it would not be safe to trust her with either a beer can or a spirit bottle. This, too, is another life saved.

The story of one of the sick girls—who may be dead now, for she looked as if she had only a few days to live when I saw her in July—was about one of the saddest tragedies I think I ever heard of. She was servant in a boys' school, where she was weak enough to allow herself to be led astray by one of the boys, when, shame and remorse pressing on her too sorely, she went mad, and was sent to St. Luke's. In time she was cured and discharged, but then she was in consumption—when I saw her, in the last stage. I do not think I ever saw such eyes. Brighter than the brightest, large, dark, hollow, they fascinated me as they looked at me with a wild, shy, hunted look—that peculiar look of latent madness added to the pathetic brilliancy of consumption. Her face was a dead waxen white, thin and ghastly—only those unearthly eyes to give it life. For a long time this poor creature would not come into the prayers daily said in the little room that serves as the chapel of the Home. Once she had been refused the Sacrament, and this had struck her. No, she said, if she was not good enough for the one, she was not good enough for the other; so she obstinately refused to join, and the Lady judiciously left her free to do as she liked. But the invalid's room is next to the chapel, where, lying on their beds, and with the door of communication open, the poor sick things may hear the prayers as well as if personally before the altar. So, gradually the dying girl came first to the invalid's room, and then one day said suddenly she would go in to prayers. The Lady went down into the common room where the children were, and told them all they were to be very careful, and not look towards the place where Kate would be. They were to take no notice of her, but they were to be good and quiet and natural. So they all came in, and, turning away their heads from Kate, stared at the Lady so persistently during the whole time of prayers, that she scarcely knew what to do under the fire of all those young round eyes. Since then poor Kate glides in, in her silent ghostly way, unnoticed and as one of the others; and she was to have the Sacrament administered—which is so much gained for the poor passing soul.

I was much pleased by the extreme simplicity and homeliness of the whole establishment. There is nothing here of the stately severity of Clewer, nothing of the uniformity of the regular Orphanages and Homes which have their own buildings and their own organisation. This Home is, as I have said, a mere cottage with a sloping roof, where the laundry is what was of old the stable; where space is so valuable that one bed is placed on a kind of shelf half way up the stairs; where scarcely two beds have the same kind of counterpane; where the beds themselves are made of chaff, shredded paper, and the like. The washstands are of the most primitive description, and the crockery is cracked and broken; but in each third room or so is a large basinful of disinfecting fluid, and the whole place, well scoured and ventilated, is as sweet as a lord's mansion. The dress of the children, too, is just of the same kind, evidently made up of scraps and chance gifts, and all of the same quality and fashion usually worn by poor children. There is no uniform, and no attempt at picturesqueness. Cleanliness and patches, wholesomeness and darns—here a battered old hat, there a tumbled old bonnet; one child in a jacket, another in a cape, a third in a "crossover;" whatever would do for clothing of a decent kind pressed into the service, and the result, to my mind, more satisfactory than if there were a larger display of the pomp of charity, and more of the perfect organisation visible in the grander, wealthier, more systematic Homes. Here, then, is a work going on of which very few know even the necessity, and which fewer still would venture to undertake. What help and what honour ought we not to show to those who attempt this reclamation of the wandering young?—to those who seek to make profit out of such apparently utterly hopeless material, and to create human beings fit for good work in the place of castaways and repro-

bates? God bless and strengthen that dear Lady's hands! God bless and prosper the Leytonstone Home!

MIDNIGHT DISCOURSE.

There is no silence in nature; there is no stillness of midnight. The London householder, who has the ceaseless beating of the great city's mighty heart close to his pillow, whose rest is hourly disturbed by the voices of innumerable church clocks, thinks of a country house as a place as free from sound at midnight as a spell-bound palace of sleep. The waiter in a railway hotel, who is kept by the steam whistle in a bondage more constant than that of Aladdin's slave, pictures to himself his cousin, the unambitious young man who took service at the farm-house down in Devonshire, as snug between lavender-scented sheets, in a repose as sure not to be broken as that of his forefathers who sleep under the churchyard yews. The lady's maid, as she keeps her unwilling and sulky vigil in the cause of fashion, fancies that if she were far from the rattle of those ricketty cabs she could doze in her chair without a breath of interruption. Even those dwellers in the country, to whom it is as portentous a matter to omit to lay hands on a bedroom candlestick at the last stroke of ten, as if without that talisman they would turn into mice or monsters, not being awake at midnight subscribe to the general belief, and suppose themselves to snore through a profound and otherwise unbroken stillness. To-night, however, as I stand at my open window and look out upon the trees, and the lawn, and the old church tower, silvery under the summer moon, and listen from my own nest in the quiet house, I hear the many voices of the midnight even here.

From afar, there comes what sounds at first like a faint wavering cry. As it draws nearer, it becomes a strange sound, as of a laugh, and yet a sob. The two great powers of joy and sorrow, who divide the empire of the human breast, seem to speak with one voice somewhere in the air. This is the cry of the night-hawk, who always flies after sundown. He delights in darting through the dusky air over the upland fields, where the strained sinews and heated feet of the tired cart-horses are getting their wholesome cold bath in the dew from the long tremulous grass. He strikes the fresh night breeze with his strong wings, making his own strange music as he goes, and is a merry though eccentric bird, who turns night into day in a rollicking fashion. But now, as I lean out over the white stars of the jasmine, a much more unearthly spirit-like cry reaches my ear. It touches the nerves for a moment, though I well know that it is only the owl who is sailing through the moonlight, and talking to himself about the probability of finding supper for his little family. I know of nothing which leads one so readily into a tide of spiritual musing as this midnight cry of the owl. The most hard worked matter-of-fact man on earth could hardly listen to it without getting a twinge of poetry. He might see the face of his mother, as he used to see it long ago, in the old family pew, with the light of the church window falling upon it. The ringlet of his first love might again touch his cheek. He might re-enter castles in the air, built in boyhood, and commune there with ghosts of long dead hopes and starved ambitions. But what is that new sound, like the noise of half a dozen fairy steam threshing-machines all in full motion? It is but the buzzing of two or three cockchafers who have been attracted by the light of my candle, and are fluttering among the jasmine blossoms just below.

It is not the greenwood only that furnishes voices for the chorus of midnight. The poultry-yard and the aviary are by no means silent. The geese are bad sleepers or much given to talking in their sleep. They cackle loudly. He knew the ways of geese who first told the old story about the saving of the capitol. Their voices seem so animated that I think they must be discussing an excursion to the stream in the valley for to-morrow, and disputing as to which willow they shall choose for their rest in the shade at noon. Chanticleer is saluting the moon with as "lively a din" as that with which he wakes up the morning. Our west country common people are much troubled in their minds when they are wide enough awake to hear a cock crowing at midnight; they regard it as a foreboding of death. If somebody in our village had died every time the cocks crowed at midnight during this year 'sixty eight, there would not be sixty-eight of us left. Shakespeare must have heard the cocks crowing, on bright clear frosty winter nights, in the court-yard of Ann Hathaway's dwelling as he left the old farmhouse after some convivial meeting; and finding thus that a beautiful sacred ancient superstition, which he had learned at his mother's knee, was confirmed by nature, wrote those familiar lines in Hamlet of "the bird of dawn:"

> Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes,
> Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
> This bird of dawning singeth all night long,
> And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad,
> The nights are wholesome.

A melody comes stealing towards me, seeming to rise and fall with the breeze. So might Jessica call to Lorenzo from her balcony while Shylock sleeps. So might Laura's spirit speak. These are the voices of the doves that live in the large cage in the garden, and spend much of the night in sweet discourse together. Somewhere near at hand I hear a monotonous grinding, a lazy comfortable noise that makes me drowsy. It is made by the teeth of the horses as they crunch sleepily at their oats. There is a plaintive whimper under the window, sad to hear. It is the voice of a poor hungry dog strayed hither to look for food. Catch-

ing the sound of the intruder's voice, our well-fed pets set up for justices of peace, and raise their voices to put down the base cur who dares to hint that he is hungry. Loud thunders the deep bass bark of the Newfoundland in his kennel, the dog of the large honest head and well-knit limbs. Shrill rings the pert treble yap, yap, of the toy terrier in her basket. Thus they add their contribution to the voices of midnight. The voice of the wind is never so clear and expressive as at night. Then it is that the wind breathes among the trees those whisperings which a dreamer fashions into human speech. Then it is that the wind makes with the brooks such wondrous harmonies. Then it is that in autumn it sighs outside our window for the summer days gone by in years that are no more. And now on the roof of the house there begins weird music. It suggests mystery, and sets the fancy a working. Yet it is produced by nothing nobler than a tall and a very ugly modern chimney pot, into whose great open ear the wind pours talk.

Within the house there is no lack of voices. The crickets in the kitchen fireplace, keep high holiday at night. Chests of drawers and arm-chairs relieve their minds with inexplicable cracking noises. The steady ticking of the large clock in the hall has at this hour more solemn emphasis than at noonday. Men of the "desk, and the loom, and the mart" are very much inclined to believe that after five in the afternoon all hard work is impossible. But many a sound working brain is never so active as at midnight. Then, often are the voices of the mighty dead most audible to the attentive scholar. Then, often does thought shape itself most clearly to the thinker's brain. Some of Schiller's finest works were written at midnight. From the stir of social life, from the calmer delights of home, even from his Charlotte, he fled to a solitary little house apart from the city, where in the shadowy arbour near at hand murmured among the leaves the voice of Thekla, and upon the night wind came swelling the manly voice of William Tell; or up the lines of the dim garden walk, there rang the war cry of the maid of Orleans. The stars were looking down upon Paris when a grave melodious voice came to tell the author of Dombey how little Paul died. It was while his Christina slept, that Goethe woke to gaze at the moon. The poet brings to mind the nightingale, which in some districts makes all the night astir with melody. But in Devon and upon its borders, where I have been hearing these night voices, the song of the nightingale is never heard. It is strange that nightingales should avoid that corner of England in which the mild air breathes most like the breath of the south, and in which the woods and fields are clothed with the brightest verdure. I say nothing of such other voices heard at midnight, as the voices of old memories, of vanished hopes, of long departed dead. Mr. Longfellow, in his Voices of the Night, has given full and beautiful expression to all utterance of this sort. I confine myself to the cocks, owls, night-hawks, cockchafers, crickets, dogs, clocks, chimney-pots, and chests of drawers.

THE ABBOT'S POOL.

IN SIX CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

> She will weep her woman's tears, she will pray her woman's prayers;
> But her heart is young to pain, and her hopes will spring again
> With the sun-time of her years.
>
> MRS. B. BROWNING.

"IT is quite true, my dear," said the Vicar of Sedgbrook, as he stretched out his slippered feet, and sank back in his arm-chair to enjoy the warm fire and cheerful room, doubly appreciated after a long day passed in traversing muddy lanes from one outlying hamlet to another of his scattered country parish: "it is quite true; I met Denbigh this afternoon at the quarry cottages, and asked him if I were to wish him joy; and he said 'Yes, it is just settled.' He seems in very high spirits, in his quiet stiff sort of way."

"Well, of course I am not surprised," said Mrs. Carter, who sat at the tea-table. "I must go the first thing to-morrow and tell Elsie that I wish her joy."

"You can't forgive her, I know, for taking a second husband," said the vicar, smiling. "Now I respect her sense for putting herself into the hands of a clever, well-to-do man like Denbigh, who will always be able to take care of her and maintain her."

"Maintain her! So like a man!" cried Mrs. Carter; "always taking the mercenary commonplace view of things! However, in this instance, I am quite disposed to forgive the poor little thing—only when one compares Mr. Denbigh with Herbert Clavering!——"

"Well, my dear, really if you come to that, Clavering was a good little fellow enough, but Denbigh——"

"Oh! if you go by height and size, and thews and sinews, there is no doubt which has the advantage; Mr. Denbigh is by no means little—nor particularly good either, I should say."

"You don't appreciate Denbigh, Mary; I assure you he is a first-rate fellow."

"As far as cleverness goes, and all that, I have no doubt he is. I suppose nobody doubts that he is the cleverest doctor in Slowshire. I can't conceive what makes him content to stay in this poky little place. But I can't bear those stiff, iron grey sort of men, with eyes that pierce like gimlets. Now there was something cheery, frank, and sunshiny about Herbert Clavering. As to this man, I don't like him, and I never did, and I never shall."

"If Mrs. Clavering does, that, happily, is of more importance."

"Yes, *if* she does; but in ninety cases out of a hundred, a woman's second marriage doesn't mean that she has forgotten number

one, or cares for number two, only that she can't bear being miserable."

"But, my dear Mary, do consider what a mere baby poor Elsie was when she married first—only sixteen on her wedding-day. I should not wonder if Denbigh were the true love after all."

"May be; there is no accounting for tastes. Ah, dear, dear! Doesn't it seem only yesterday, John, that you married those two happy-looking young creatures: Herbert Clavering, and sweet, pretty Elsie Willis?"

"Four years, my dear Mary."

"And only four months of happiness for the poor little thing in all that time! How bright she looked, didn't she, on her wedding visits? and how sure she seemed that all was to go right, and he was to get an appointment where she could be with him; and then, when he had to go off at twelve hours' notice, what a weary waiting it was when the Amethyst did not arrive at Hong-Kong in proper time. Odd, by-the-by, that Mr. Clavering should have come here as Mr. Denbigh's friend! They were school-fellows, don't you remember?"

There was a pause, during which the vicar had moved to the tea-table, and was busied in carving ham and dispensing poached eggs. Presently Mrs. Carter spoke again.

"I suppose Mr. Denbigh has always been in love with her. In those days he was dependent on his uncle, you know, and he could not have married. And don't you recollect how queer we thought it that he would not come to the wedding, though the bridegroom was his friend? However, I dare say he won't make a bad husband; though I must say, John, I think he might come to church now and then, if it were only once a year."

"Yes, that is a flaw in Denbigh's character, certainly. You know I have remonstrated with him about it before now; but, as he says, it is not easy to manage so as to make the services fit in with his other duties. Yes, I know, my dear. I understand all you mean by that look; but live and let live. We must judge people by their own standard."

"Must we? I thought there was only one standard for everybody."

"Well, for that matter," retorted the vicar, "*I* don't read anywhere that we are commanded to judge. People must do what is given them to do, my dear; and, if Denbigh's faith isn't all it might be, he has charity, which covereth a multitude of sins; he is thoroughly kind, and careful, and conscientious among the poor; and that is saying a great deal, let me tell you."

"You are too tolerant for me," said Mrs. Carter, with an expressive little shrug of her shoulders. She had never given in her allegiance to the vicar's rather broad church views. There was a long pause, till she spoke again, in a lower and more earnest tone.

"John, one thing does strike me. Is it certain that the poor man is really dead? Is Elsie justified in marrying again?"

"My dear Mary," said her husband, laughing, "if he is not dead, what do you suppose has become of him? It is two years, or nearly so, since we heard of the loss of the Amethyst."

"True," assented Mrs. Carter, thoughtfully. "Well, I hope it is all right. What a shame, though! Poor Herbert Clavering! Here am I wishing that he may be dead! John, that all comes of these hateful second marriages; they make one wish all kinds of horrid murderous things."

The meal being by this time ended, Mr. Carter rang the bell, and ordered candles to be taken into his study. His wife settled herself to her evening's work, but still, as she plied her needle, her thoughts were busy with the sad little village romance of which a new chapter seemed to be opening.

Meanwhile, the two parties principally concerned, whose affairs were the engrossing topic of conversation among all classes in Sedgbrook, were happily oblivious of every human being except themselves.

Elsie Clavering had lived almost all her short life in the Churchyard Cottage, as it was called: a picturesque, ivy-grown, inconvenient little abode, close to the churchyard gate. There, her grandmother, the widow of a former vicar, had received her in her orphan babyhood; there, her young husband had seen her, and wooed her, and won her, all in the course of his fortnight's visit; there, he had left her during the voyage which had ended so fatally; there, she had continued to reside, first with her grandmother, and alone after the old lady's death; there she was seated now, on a low chair close to the cheery fire, which lighted up the little square parlour with a comfortable red brightness. She looked very very young to have passed through the greatest joy and sorrow of a woman's life—younger even than her twenty years warranted. Hers was the soft, fair, flower-like beauty which seems to belong to childhood. It was difficult to believe that the thin black dress which set off her dazzling fairness, was worn for a husband, or that the bright locks, which curled down on her shoulders, were too short to plait or twist, because they had so lately been cut, and tucked away under a widow's cap. No doubt she had known anxious days and watchful nights, but they had left no traces on the fair young face; there was a sweet pensive gravity on the drooping eyelids, with their heavy dark fringe, and on the quiet mouth; but the delicate tint on her cheek was fresh and healthful, and there was not a furrow on her brow to tell of the heart-sickness of hope deferred. Her lover sate close beside her, on a seat lower than her own, so that he was almost at her feet. The contrast was striking, between her peculiarly fragile youthful beauty and the dark middle-aged gravity which made him seem much older than he really was.

"Let it be the fifteenth, Elsie," he was saying; "life is very short, and my last four years have been almost more than a man can bear. I shall never rest till you are quite my own."

"What are you afraid of?" asked Elsie.

"Anything, everything—a ghost from the grave, I think. When I was a boy at school, Elsie, I used to think, as the holidays drew near, that I never should live till the day came. I think I feel the same now, about our wedding-day."

"Let it be just as you wish, Philip," said Elsie, with a little sigh. "I shall be very, very thankful. You do not know the rest and comfort it will be to me to begin my new life, with you to care for me, and with duties to do. I have been so very unhappy for such a long time."

The tears filled her eyes, and rolled down her cheeks; but he caught her in his arms and kissed them away; he called God to witness that not a cloud should come across her sky when she was his wife; he vowed that when her life was in his keeping, it should be one long summer's day of brightness. His vehemence seemed to scare her; she drew back, shrinking, from the clasp of his arms.

"Do not talk so," she said; "you frighten me. Who can tell what Heaven has in store for us? I have learnt not to build too much on happiness, and, above all, not to think much about the future; it is not in our own power."

"It is more in our own power than you think," Philip Denbigh answered. "I believe that to wish a thing intensely, perseveringly, to the exclusion of every other thought and feeling, brings it to pass oftener than people suppose."

He checked himself, for a pang of self-reproach struck on his heart as he asked himself, had not his love for Elsie taken the form of just such a longing, and had not his passionate wish been fulfilled at a fearful cost? He spoke smilingly, and in a lighter tone, as he said:

"We see when a man's fate is too much for him; but who can tell how many times a man's intense will conquers his fate?"

Perhaps it was a relief to both of them, that their tête-à-tête was interrupted by the entrance of a kind little old maiden lady who lived some miles off, and who had lately come, at Mrs. Clavering's request, to remain with her till her marriage. Elsie was never so happy as when her lover was with her, but she was sometimes scared by the vehement expressions which she could not echo and could hardly understand. In the presence of others he was wholly undemonstrative, and his conversation—which was of books, and all the literary and scientific subjects of the day—far above the usual Sedgbrook level, was delightful to Elsie; who, though not clever herself, was very appreciative, and of the sweet teachable nature which mankind most values in a wife or sister. To Philip Denbigh her very presence brought an indescribable charm and delight. She suited him exactly, to use the common-place phrase; in grander language, she satisfied every craving of his nature. Her sweet beauty, her gentle yielding temper, her soft repose, so unlike his own vehement concentrated nature, were all delightful to him. The old uncle who had left him his practice, together with a house, a garden, and a field, all known by the name of The Abbot's Portion, had also given him an education rather beyond the requirements of a village surgeon. His skilful treatment of a very difficult surgical case, had since brought him under the notice of some high medical authorities in London and Paris, he had been repeatedly urged not to waste his talents in that remote country region, but to avail himself of more than one opening which had come in his way. Hitherto he had invariably refused; some thought from a feeling of loyalty towards old Sedgbrook, where a Denbigh had been the village doctor ever since the year one; others thought (and with more reason) because he could not endure to leave the place where Elsie Clavering was bearing her long trial.

When he wished her good night on this evening, he said, "I shall have more spirit now, Elsie, and more ambition. Shall you break your heart if I carry you off from old Sedgbrook some day?"

"No, I shall carry my home with me," she answered, looking up in his face with her pretty smile.

"I should like to give you a sunnier home than dingy old Abbot's Portion," he said. "I should like my Elsie to take her place some day among the ladies of the land."

With a fond good night he left her, and was soon in the churchyard, which led on the other side, through a turnstile and a narrow lane, into the main street of the village. Following this for some way, he then turned up another narrow lane, and in a few minutes found himself at the little white gate which led, through a narrow strip of garden, to his house. It was a quaint building of a dull red colour, with heavy old-fashioned windows in settings of grey stone. It had once been attached to a religious house, as farm or guest-house, and hence its peculiar name. The little entrance-hall and a dingy square parlour looked towards the road: an ugly little excrescence of modern growth had a separate entrance to itself, and was the surgery. Two large low sitting-rooms at the back looked, across a small garden, to the field which completed the domain. That field was dreaded by the youth of Sedgbrook, for in one corner was a black-looking pool of water which, tradition said, was of unfathomable depth; it was surrounded on three sides by high banks, and overhung by an elm-tree, on which, according to the same tradition, the last abbot had been hanged, his body being afterwards flung into the pool, which had borne his name from that time. Of course his ghost "walked," and no threats or promises would have induced a Sedgbrook lad to venture near the haunted spot after dark. To this superstition Mr. Denbigh was indebted for a great deal of tranquillity, as the place, being a famous one for blackberries in autumn and for skating in winter, and at all times delightfully perilous to life and limb, might otherwise have been more

popular with the village youth than would have been at all agreeable to the inhabitants of Abbot's Portion.

As Mr. Denbigh let himself in, he was met by a comely-looking elderly servant with a candle in her hand: a broad-faced, rough, kindly West-country woman, once his nurse, whom he had summoned two years before, on his uncle's death, to act as housekeeper for him, while her husband accompanied her as groom, gardener, and factotum.

"What, Isott, not gone yet?" said her master, in the quick short manner which was habitual to him. "I thought I told you never to wait for me."

"I be just agoin', sir; my master, he've bin to bed most two hours agone," was the answer, in a brisk good-tempered voice and a broad Slowshire dialect.

"Has he? Then I advise you to follow your master's example as quickly as you can."

She lingered a minute, looking wistfully at his face. Then, as she caught his eye, broke into a broad smile.

"Bain't I to know nothing, sir?" she said; "there were a body here to-night as says the volks be talking."

"Well, the folks are right for once. I am going to be married, Isott."

Isott's sly smile became more sly still, and demurely she replied,

"I could 'a tell'd ye that six months agone."

"It is only just settled," Philip said, impressively. "What is the matter now?" as the old woman stood fidgeting with the corner of her apron.

"Now I be to turn out, I war'nt," she said, in a grumbling tone.

"No, indeed, Isott, Mrs. Clavering is most anxious to keep you on. But we will discuss all that, another time. Be off now, and let me lock the door after you."

The old servant lingered, as if anxious for a little chat, but she knew of old that "master 'ood be minded," so she obeyed.

He held open the front door, and let the rays of his candle fall on the dark wet lane, until the click, click, of her pattens ceased, and he knew that she had reached the cottage where she and her husband lived, and which was only on the opposite side of the narrow road. Then he shut the door, and, taking the light, went into the larger of the two back sitting-rooms, and looked carefully around. The furniture was solid and ugly, the paper and carpet were worn to a general dull brownness of hue; but the windows opened on the garden, and the mantel-shelf was of dark old oak, quaintly carved. Altogether, the room had capabilities. He looked round it with a feeling of restless feverish happiness. Often and often, and for very long—too long!—had he planned how it could be fitted up, so as to be worthy of Elsie. To see her there, had been the one vision of his life; for that faint uncertain hope he had lived, and saved, and denied himself everything; every sixpence that he could spare had been laid aside for the decoration of this shrine, long before the day when he knew that his goddess was free to receive his homage.

Seldom, very seldom, does such idol-worship take possession of a man's nature. Still more rarely, is it followed by a blessing!

CHAPTER II.

"Il y a une page effrayante dans le livre des destinées humaines. On y lit en tête ces mots: 'les désirs accomplis.'"

MADAME DE BONNEVAL.

So the hours came and the hours went, and brought the eve of Philip and Elsie's wedding-day. It was to be a quiet wedding, as all felt that any rejoicings would be out of place after so brief and sad a widowhood. Mrs. Clavering herself, though thankful and content at heart, would have shrunk from anything like bridal display.

The few weeks which intervened between the announcement of his engagement and his marriage, had been spent by Philip Denbigh in busy preparations for welcoming home his bride. All was completed now; the house was brightened up to receive its new mistress; the two maids who were to assist old Isott, were engaged to come at the end of the week's holiday, which was all that so busy a man could spare for his honeymoon; nothing remained for him to do, but to pay a last visit to all his patients, and to complete the final arrangement with Mr. Scott, the Slowcombe surgeon, who was to attend them during his short absence. It was well, perhaps, that all these things kept him so hard at work from the late winter's dawn until the early twilight, that he had scarcely time to think; for he was haunted on this last day of his unmarried life by the feeling he had described to Elsie: an unreasonable doubt and dread lest the happiness so close before him never could be his.

He had told Elsie that he would be too busy to see her, that day; but splashing home late in the evening from a visit to a patient, and seeing a light still in her drawing-room, the temptation was strong upon him to go in and wish her good night, especially as he felt a jealous fear lest, on this last evening of her widowhood, the old love and the old memory might be rising up to trouble her peace. The maid admitted him, and hastily passing her, he opened the door of the little parlour. Mrs. Clavering was sitting in her usual low chair by the nearly dying fire, but crouching forward, her face buried in her hands, evidently weeping, though silently. Philip's heart grew cold, and his face white and set, at this sight; he had nearly turned to go without betraying his presence, but at the moment Elsie looked up, saw him, and, with a little cry of relief, hurried across the room to him: resting against him as he took her in his arms, like a little frightened child that had found its protector.

"Oh, I am so glad you are come!" she whispered, with a fresh burst of tears.

"I began to think I had better not have

come," he said, stiffly, for jealousy made his heart sore.

"Why?"

The innocent wondering eyes met his for a moment, then drooped as she held out her left hand, and showed the third finger slightly swelled and reddened round the wedding-ring.

"This is it," she whispered. "You know you made me promise to take it off before to-morrow, and I tried. But look; my finger has swollen round it quite suddenly, and do what I will I cannot move it. I am very silly, Philip, but I could not help crying. Is it not a bad omen?"

"An omen very quickly put an end to," said Mr. Denbigh, producing from his pocket a case of uncomfortable-looking instruments. "I will nip it off for you in a moment."

But Elsie held back her hand.

"No, Philip," she said, pleadingly, "please let me keep it on, till to-morrow. If it does not come off easily before we go to church, you shall take it off for me then; but I can't quite say good-bye to the old life till I begin the new one."

There was a pause; then Philip took her hands almost roughly, and held her from him while he looked searchingly in her face. It blushed under his gaze, though again the eyes were raised fearlessly and wondering.

"Elsie," he said, in a hoarse voice, "if your heart is gone down into the grave with that other man, say so. Do not let me give all and get nothing."

"Oh! have you been fancying that I was fretting?" Elsie exclaimed. In a lower tone, and as if her own words almost frightened her, she went on: "Could you think so, Philip? Don't you understand that I am only sorry, and grieved, and angry with myself because I do *not* feel as I ought? Yes, you were right in what you said; that was a child's love, and this is the real grown-up love; and now this about my ring seemed like reproach."

"You are making me much happier than I can express," was all her lover could answer.

"And I hope—I do hope—my feelings are not wronging his memory," she whispered on. "I did care: you know I did. But, oh! not as I care for you."

She looked up at him with such a look of trust and affection as those sweet eyes had never given him before. Doubts and fears vanished, and for once his restless passionate heart was at peace.

Elsie Clavering had spoken the truth in the avowal she had just made. Her sailor lover, gay, buoyant, and rather shallow, had been too like herself in temperament to command the reverence with which Philip Denbigh had inspired her. The days of her first short bright wooing had passed by, stirring only the surface of her nature, and leaving its depths to be fathomed in a later hour.

"She is happy, she is really and truly happy now!" thought her lover, as he walked home through the darkness of the foggy January night. "She will be a thousand times happier than that poor fellow ever could have made her. Fate has been good to us both. She would have been utterly thrown away on poor empty-headed Clavering, whose sailor admiration of beauty was just stirred by her pretty face, but who would have liked any other well-looking girl just as much as my pearl, my darling, the only woman in the whole world to me! I have won her at last—at last—after all these years! Only this one night more to be lived through, and to-morrow—to-morrow!"

An early hour had been fixed for the marriage, in order that it might be as quiet as possible; it was hardly nine o'clock, when Mrs. Carter, almost the only invited guest, arrived at the church, and took her place in the vicarage pew. It was a raw black morning, with a biting wind threatening snow. The vicar's wife was shivering under all her wraps, and half sobbing besides, for she had a keen feeling that the eternal fitness of things, and, above all, the dignity of womanhood, were outraged by the purpose for which she had come there; and that Elsie Clavering, by all the rules of feminine propriety, was bound rather to have died of a broken heart.

"Oh! if John were to die, would I ever, ever forget him?" thought the warm-hearted little woman. She was in the midst of a doleful, and yet rather soothing, vision of her own inconsolable conduct at John's funeral, when a sound in the porch made her turn her head, and she saw the bridegroom entering. But such a bridegroom! Philip Denbigh was at all times pale; but the white, set, ghastly face of the man then entering the porch was as unlike the Philip Denbigh of yesterday as a stiffened corpse is unlike the living breathing creature. Mrs. Carter was absolutely terror-stricken.

"Good God, this man is going mad!" was the thought which flashed across her. Next moment she smiled at her own fears, when she saw that the doctor's manner was quite collected. But old Isott, who, in her cherry-coloured merino and white ribbons, was standing close by, never took her eyes off her master. And she observed what Mrs. Carter did not, that—when he tried to pass the time in turning over the leaves of a prayer-book, his hand so shook that he was obliged to put it down, and that all the while he stood with folded arms awaiting his bride, he was gnawing his under lip. But he was ready in a moment to take his place before the altar when Elsie arrived, leaning on the arm of a kind old gentleman of the neighbourhood, who had undertaken to act as father for the occasion. She had chosen a very quiet dowager garb: a dress of silver grey silk, which fell about her in soft rich folds, under the long white burnous; and a few green orange-leaves in her small white bonnet prevented her dress from being half mourning. But she could not have chosen any dress which would have set off to greater advantage her childish feminine beauty.

"Surely," thought Mrs. Carter, "she must

be startled if she looks at his face." And a sentence which she had not read for years came back to her mind. "For as brent as your brow is, there is that in it that is as near akin to death as to wedlock."

But Elsie saw nothing: during the whole service she did not once raise her eyes. Only once she shrank, when Philip seized her hand with a grasp as hot as fire, squeezing her soft little fingers with a positively painful force. And once again she started when the vicar's impressive voice pronounced the solemn words: "What God hath joined, let no man put asunder." For then the hot hand holding hers suddenly became as chill as death.

It was over. Mr. Denbigh had only to draw his wife's arm through his, and take her down the short path to the churchyard cottage, where she was to change her sober bridal dress for some dark travelling gear more suited to a wintry journey. The sea-side place to which they were bound was barely ten miles distant, and the post-chaise which was to convey them thither was ready packed at the door when they left the church, so Mrs. Denbigh did not wonder that her husband hurried her away from the congratulating crowd at the church door, muttering something about making haste lest they should be caught in the snow-storm, now evidently imminent.

When she came down-stairs from her hasty toilet, she found her husband standing by the fire, his face buried in his folded arms, which rested on the mantelshelf. His attitude was so expressive of suffering, mental or bodily, that she hastened to him, asking if he were ill.

"Ill? No," he answered; but with such a face that she exclaimed:

"You are, I am sure. What is the matter, Philip?"

"I was in the clouds—or in the fire," he answered with a laugh. "Are you ready?"

"In one moment; but look, Philip; I wanted to show you my finger. You see it has only your ring on it now. Last night, the other was as tightly fixed as ever, but in the morning it had slipped off of its own accord. Is it not strange?"

Her husband made no answer; indeed he hardly seemed to hear her, so intent was he on folding her wraps about her, and hurrying her into the carriage.

He leaned back in total silence while they drove up the village street, lined with gazers. His wife saw from the impatient movement of his foot that he was suffering under some annoyance, and thought that he was vexed for her sake by the number of people, who showed their interest, in their rough country fashion, by staring with all their eyes.

"I don't mind, Philip," she said, turning to him. Again the look on his face startled her.

Next moment, as they left the village behind them, and emerged into the quiet country road, he clasped her in his arms:

"Mine at last! There is no power in heaven or earth, my Elsie, that can part us now."

"I had no idea," said Mrs. Carter to her husband, when they talked over the wedding that evening, "that Mr. Denbigh could be so nervous and queer. I always thought him disagreeable, but I never knew him so perfectly odious as he was this morning—rushing off with Elsie without letting her even say thank you, when we were all wishing her joy; and glaring at everybody as if he defied them to look at her. Such horrid bad manners! And all the time did you ever see such a face? I am sure he looked more as if he were going to be hanged than married."

"A man always does look a fool on these occasions," said the vicar.

During the night the impending snow fell heavily. When Mrs. Denbigh drew up her window-blind, and looked out next morning, it was on a world as white as her wedding veil.

The snow lasted all through the week, and was lying deep and hard frozen on the ground when Mr. Denbigh brought home his bride. It was quite dark, except for the dreary cold light from the white ground, when their fly drove along the village street, and turned up the narrow lane which led to Abbot's Portion. As it stopped at the gate, the door was flung open, and old Isott appeared, with a lighted candle and a beaming face. The little entrance-hall looked cheerful: still more cheerful looked the sitting-room, of which the open door gave a sight, all bright with fire and candle, and gay with white papering and soft moss carpet, and groups of low chairs and graceful little tables, and endless dainty devices, all wonderfully unlike the usual fittings in the "best parlour" of a country surgeon's wife. Elsie Denbigh had hardly time for an exclamation of delighted surprise, for her husband's one idea was to get her out of the cold; and it was not until he had almost carried her to the fireside, and unfastened her many wrappers, that she could look round and take in the gay bridal effect of the room.

"How beautiful!" she cried, when at last she had studied every detail of delicate chintz and fresh well-chosen furniture; "and all my own belongings from the cottage, fitted in, as if they had always been here! Are you a conjuror, Philip? Ah, now I know why you had business here, and left me for nearly a whole day. How charming it all is!"

"Do you really like it, Elsie? Does it please you? Are you sure?"

"Like it? Do I not? What an array of books!" She kneeled to examine the book-shelves, which filled a recess near the fireplace. "You will read to me, won't you, Philip, and teach me to like all the books that you are fond of? And oh, a grand piano!"

"It has always been my ambition to give you that, Elsie; sit down and sing me one of your songs—worth all the books that ever were written."

Elsie obeyed, and for the next hour sang

song after song: her husband listening as he leaned back in his easy-chair to the sweet voice which had always seemed to him the perfection of melody. Then Isott summoned them to supper, and would allow nobody but herself to wait on her master and mistress that night.

"This room looks out at the back, of course," said Mrs. Denbigh, as they returned to the drawing-room after their meal was over. "How many years have passed since I was in it last!" She drew the window-curtain and looked out." How weird and strange the garden looks!" she said to her husband, who had not followed her; "all the bushes standing up like so many ghosts in their white shrouds! And that is the Abbot's Pool, I suppose—that dark spot under the tree? It looks strange to me seen from here."

She drew the curtain with some exclamation about the cold, and came to her husband's side, shivering.

"You have caught cold. You are ill, Elsie. Do you feel faint?"

"Oh no; something seemed to strike me cold in a moment. Isott would say that some one was walking over my grave."

"Sit down," he said, and drew a chair to the fire, adding, in his quick professional manner, "never neglect a shiver. Are you warmer? You are sure? Let me feel your hand again."

"Quite well now. I think the old Abbot's Pool Ghost must have had some idea of appearing to me, do you know? I am glad he thought better of it, and didn't. You can't think how strange I felt for a moment—quite suddenly—as I was looking at that gloomy place."

"It is a gloomy place," he said, still chafing her hands. "Some of these days we'll leave it far away, Elsie. There! I've put some warmth into these poor little chilled fingers at last."

To hide some vague feeling of discomfort which still hung about her, she turned to a table where several wedding presents and other ornaments were arranged, and took up a basket of old-fashioned card filagree, in which a number of rolled papers, pink, blue, and yellow, stood up like soldiers at drill.

"What a kind old-fashioned thought of old Miss Ducane's," she said, smiling. "Have you seen her present to me, Philip—a set of Shakespeare characters? Shall I draw and try my fate? Though it is rather late in the day for that." Laughing, she drew out a pink paper, but her countenance changed as she read it, and she handed it to her husband, saying: "I don't think they should put anything so painful and horrid as that!"

It was the sentence from Richard the Third:

Have not to do with him: beware of him:
Sin, Death, and Hell have set their marks on him,
And all their ministers attend on him.

"Tear it up," said Philip Denbigh, curtly.

"But they are all arranged in order: it will spoil the set."

"Then the set must be spoilt. Tear up the paper."

Elsie had never heard that tone of command before, and she wondered to see how his eyebrows were drawn together until they nearly met, and how he watched her obedient fingers, as if she could not tear the offending paper into morsels small enough.

When it was done, he took up the heap of letters awaiting him, and became buried in their contents; but while Elsie moved softly about, accustoming herself to the new room and the new life, she now and then met his eyes, fixed on her with a look she could not understand, and which was instantly withdrawn when their glances met. She resolved to put the obnoxious present out of sight next morning: nor did she feel quite happy until he had finished reading his letters, and had spoken to her again in his usual voice and manner.

On the following morning a thaw had set in. Everything was dripping and dropping, and when Mr. Denbigh mounted his horse, after breakfast, to go on his rounds, he recommended his wife not to set foot outside the door all day. She promised to obey, unless it should turn out temptingly fine; and during the morning was fully occupied; for old Isott seized upon her, and insisted on her undergoing a display of the contents of every drawer, closet, and cupboard, and of the inventories thereunto belonging. This got over at last, she ate her solitary luncheon, and after that found plenty to do in arranging her possessions, so that it was not until late in the afternoon that she came into her drawing-room to see that the fire was bright and ready for her husband's return. It struck her that the empty flower-vases looked dreary, and wanted a dash of colour to set off their whiteness; the sun shining in at the moment, she hastily put on cloak, and hat, and clogs, and sallied out to gather some sprays of holly, of which plenty grew on the banks of the Abbot's Pool.

Down the slippery garden walk she went with careful steps, and up the green bank, more slippery still, which overhung the deep hollow where the half-frozen waters lay. A shower of melting snow fell from a bush as she drew a bough down towards her; and as she bent forward, shaking off the drops from her cloak and hair, she saw something glistening in the wet grass at her feet. She stooped to pick it up, and it was a ring—a ring of curious workmanship, with a ruby set in it. The sight was a strange one to her. Just such a ring had been one of the few ornaments left her by her mother, and she had given it to her first husband on the very evening when they wished each other that sad long good-bye. The coincidence was a strange one, she thought, and, with a thrill of superstitious alarm, she remarked how exact a resemblance it was; the shape and size of the stone, the peculiar antique setting; even a little flaw she remembered in her ruby was repeated in this stone. She could scarcely believe that she did not really hold in her hand

the love-token which had gone down into the deep sea on her dead husband's finger.

She walked back to the house, sadly, and, when she found herself in the fast darkening bedroom, was seized with a fit of eerie spectral terror. She flung her hat and cloak on the bed, and was rushing down at full speed to the drawing-room, where candles had just been placed, when her husband, coming in at the front door, almost caught her in his arms.

She was surprised by the quickness with which he perceived that something was amiss, and at the sharp tone, almost expressive of some keen anxiety, in which he asked:

"What is it? What has happened?"

She told him, as they stood together by the drawing-room fire: ending with the very natural question:

"Is it not strange? I never saw a ring in the least like it anywhere, and this is exactly the same."

He roughly snatched the ring out of her hand, exclaiming:

"Throw it into the fire—don't touch it—throw it away!"

Elsie's first impulse, then as always, was to submit; but in a moment she recollected that the ring must belong to somebody, and that it was of real value. As she stooped to rescue it, he held her back, angrily.

"I won't have you perpetually harking back to that old story. Everything you see, every trifle that happens, you twist into some recollection of what you ought never to think of more. You wrong me in your thoughts, Elsie, every hour of the day."

Dismayed, astonished, and scared, Elsie drew back, and hastily bared her arm where his iron fingers had left their purple marks. She looked at the bruise with the piteous look of a child that has received a hurt, and presently tears began to flow. But he was by no means softened at the sight; with unabated anger he went on:

"What is it you suppose? What is it you assert? Let me know at once, all you are thinking."

"What can I think?" she said, looking up in wonder. "I do not understand you to-day, Philip. Of course this ring must have been dropped by somebody; but it is so like the ring I gave——" She stopped, afraid of again rousing his jealous temper, and pleaded: "Any one would have been startled, Philip; you should not—you should not——" And here broke down and began to cry.

He took several turns up and down the room, then stopped, close to her, as she stood leaning on the mantel-piece.

"Elsie, stop those sobs. Stop them at once, if you do not want to drive me mad. Crying? Are you actually crying because I have been a brute to you? And I vowed I would never cause you one tear! Oh! my darling, my darling forgive me."

The tears vanished in smiles.

"You did frighten me for a minute," she said; "but it is over now. You take everything too seriously, Philip."

"Do I? Bear with me, Elsie, bear with me, for if I loved you less I should take things less to heart. Dry your eyes, and think no more about it now, my poor, poor little darling."

"Do you pity me?" asked Elsie, all bright and happy again; "indeed you need not; and look! here is the ring: it has fallen quite harmlessly under the grate."

"Give it to me," said her husband, holding out his hand, "I will advertise it in the local paper. You know Abbot's Pool has been a lion in a small way; but I shall put an end to all that now, and lock up the field."

"Here it is," said Elsie; "surely it is not hot."

"No; why?"

"I fancied that you shrank, as if it burnt your fingers."

Next day she asked her husband if he had taken any steps about the advertisement; he curtly answered that he had settled it all; and she, being a woman of a yielding disposition and no great curiosity, remained satisfied with the answer.

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HESTER'S HISTORY.

A NEW SERIAL TALE.

CHAPTER XXIV. ON A SUMMER EVENING, AT SHANE'S CASTLE.

THERE is a little village near Dublin called Santry. In the days of my story there was a familiar excitement dear to the children of this village, which was the sound of a post-horn blown lustily from the distance, swelling nearer and nearer, which was also the sight of a wonderful coach coming whirling down the road, the coachman's scarlet coat shining through clouds of yellow dust. But one glowing May-day there was a new excitement in store for the children of the village of Santry. A crowd of a thousand gloomy men came, and gathered in a field beside the road. And the children looked on in wonder, while car and cart, ploughshare and barrow were dragged from shed and from stable-yard, and placed in a strange barricade across the road. And when the coach came cheerily along, bringing its triumphant music down the hill, a few of those silent men stepped forth from the field and took possession of the horses. The music ceased, the passengers were escorted with courtesy to the houses of the villagers, a light was put to the straw under the perch where the driver had smoked his pipe for many years, and the gay wonderful coach became a bonfire, to the terror and admiration of the children, and the grim satisfaction of those gloomy men. The children did not know what it all meant; but the nation did. Before twenty-four hours had passed war was declared, and the country was in arms. A week passed, and battles had been fought and won, and fire and sword raged through the land.

The men of the North had not yet arisen. They waited in awful quietude the signal of their leader. It was during this terrible pause that Sir Archie Munro received an urgent message from his friend Lord O'Neal. The message was simply an invitation to dinner. A safe message; though this was hardly a time for giving dinners. But Sir Archie knew well that there was something important to be said—something which could not be trusted upon paper. Lord O'Neal was known to be a loyal man, and his passport in Sir Archie's hand was sufficient protection to bring him safely from Glenluce to Shane's Castle.

It was a glorious evening, about the first day of June, when Sir Archie Munro rode through Shane's Castle Park. He entered at the Randalstown gates, by which the silver Maine dives under its bridge at the entrance to the little town. He turned his head to see the image of the golden sun quivering in the water, and the cozy village nestling among its May-flowers, and turf-smoke, and apple-trees, away beyond the river, across the rugged bridge. But when he plunged into the park the river went with him; though hidden for a time behind the primrose dells and dingles, the green slopes and wooded hills. Now he had miles of smooth verdure on either hand, with, in the distance, golden bars of sunset glowing behind files of young trees that mustered on the upland. Now tall grand firs rose and confronted him at a sudden turning; directed him with their pointing fingers to lose himself in a sombre wilderness, where their more majestic brethren thronged together in dusky crowds, turning the day into night under the shadow of their foliage.

The darkness thickened. There was no sound of the horse's feet on the soft earth in the moist shade. A brown atmosphere of twilight lurked under the lofty roofing of the pines, and swept its heavy shade down their branches to meet the lower thickets. Then the ferns and the young saplings, the tall tufts and purple drifts of the wild hyacinth, the snowberry and the blackberry, the matted mosses, and the scarlet-headed stalks of the nightshade, sprang together in magnificent disorder, and wove themselves into masses to enrich the splendid gloom. Here and there fierce red sparks from the sunset came glowering with lurid eyes through little holes in the thicket, as if a fire had been getting kindled in the underwood.

Now an opening shone through the dusk. The trees stood aside, and suffered the pathway to lead the way up to a stately bridge. Under the arches of the bridge flowed the river, suddenly flashing from behind the sombre pine-forest, broader, fuller, more luminous than when last seen. A lordly river that for ages had laid its silver neck under the foot of the O'Neal, gathering legends and lilies as it hurried on its way to give its treasures to the mysterious keeping of the storied Lough Neagh. Now the cawing of rooks announced the neigh-

bourhood of the castle. "War! war!" they seemed calling to one another across the trees.

Another turning, and Sir Archie checked his horse, and sat gazing on the scene. There was the castle, a pile of hoary grandeur, with its roots in a green slope and its massive turrets in solemn relief against the burnished sky. There was the banshee's tower, the dwelling of the spirit who watched over the fortunes of the house of O'Neal. There was the face upon its side, sculptured in black marble, which had been placed there no one knew how, and which was to fall from its height and crumble into dust when the race of O'Neal should fail. There was the long rampart, with its rows of cannon levelled this moment at the sunset, its watch-tower at either end growing up out of the lough, hooded in ivy, with steps winding into the water. Beyond all these was the wide, shining, charmed Lough Neagh, stretching like a great sea to the horizon, shuffling gold and crimson from ripple to ripple of its little waves, baffling the eyes that would fain look into its enchanted depths for a peep of the "round towers of other days." Away round the edge of the enchanted lough crept the lovely shores, fringed with stately trees, streaked with pale shell-strewn beach, enriched with glowing drifts of wandering flowers, that carried their bloom to the very margin of the water. Beautiful are the banks of this weird Lough Neagh as the ideal dwelling-place of a poet.

"And God has made our land so fair!" said Sir Archie, bitterly, groaning as he thought of the agonised hearts that were rushing on death from end to end of the country. "Heaven has showered boons upon us surely. The misrule of men has added horror and desolation to the list."

There were no other guests at Shane's Castle that night. Sir Archie found his lordship alone. The dinner passed almost in silence. The guest was pale and grave, the host a little absent in his manner, albeit mindful of the courtesies of the occasion. The well-trained servants made strange mistakes, and came and went breathlessly, afraid to lose a word that might be spoken by those they served. But little was said between those who dined till the attendants had disappeared. Then host and guest sat over their wine, looking out upon the shifting shining lough, haloed with the mingled glory of its natural beauty and the glamour of its mystical traditions.

"This wine is excellent," said Sir Archie, breaking the silence.

"The wine is good enough," said Lord O'Neal, impatiently. "I did not bring you here, however, to praise my wine."

"I know it," said Sir Archie. "I have been waiting for you to speak."

"I beg your pardon," said his lordship. "These times are enough to break a man's temper. Well, you have come here at the risk of your life to hear what I have to say to you. Let me say it at once, for at a moment's notice we may be interrupted. I have to tell you that you are a marked man, suspected of being secretly a leader of the rebels. I would counsel you to enlist under government at once, to take an open decided part, which will silence enemies—which will save you from destruction."

Sir Archie, pale and stern, put down his glass, leaned forward on the table, and looked his host in the face.

"And you are an Irishman," he said, "who give me this advice?"

Lord O'Neal's eye fell. A dark blush sprang to his face, and mounted to his very hair.

"I am an Irishman," he said, "and I give you this advice. I give it you because patriotism is useless at this crisis. England has been too clever to leave us strength to succeed in such a struggle as the present. Our veins have been bled to make her strong to crush us. She will crush us, and she will not spare us one agony in the operation. Munro! I would not see your name and race swept off the land: never to speak of your six feet of noble manhood, which I have loved. For, Munro! we have been friends!"

"Ay, O'Neal!" said Sir Archie, and laid his hand on the lord's open outstretched palm. A long close clasp, and then the hand of each was withdrawn, and the two sat silent, gazing on the shifting, glittering, mystical lake. Maybe it told them the truth, that they never should sit so together again; that ere many days had passed one of them should kiss the dust, cut down to the death at his own gates; the other should be a wanderer in bitter banishment.

Sir Archie was the first to speak.

"O'Neal," he said, "no two sons of this distracted country need quarrel because their opinions differ as to the possible cure of her misery, so long as those opinions are grounded upon honesty. We live in the midst of inextricable confusion and horror. Our suffering blinds us, and no wonder if we dash against each other, rushing about madly, looking for some outlet from despair. I believe with you that no such outlet will be forced in the present struggle."

"None," said Lord O'Neal, gloomily.

"Listen to me then," said Sir Archie. "I will not buy my own safety by accepting a situation as executioner of my tortured countrymen. I——"

"Hold!" cried Lord O'Neal, fiercely. "I am not a Castlereagh!"

"God forbid!" said Sir Archie. "But neither am I your judge. You know your own conscience best. I am not going to reproach you, but to expose to you my own views and intentions. In the first place I may tell you that the suspicions you speak of are unfounded, for I am grieved—ay, ashamed—to have to say that I am not a leader of the rebels. I ought to have been a leader of the rebels, and so ought you, and every man who has influence and power in the country. We have been systematically, and in cold blood, goaded to resistance. If we had all arisen as a man and resisted,

we should have compelled our rulers to treat us like the rest of humanity, and the world would have looked on and respected us. But we are timid; we stand aloof: we think to buy peace, to save bloodshed. Some of us are bought, others are led astray by our feelings or our theories. And so we sit on in our high places and groan idly; or worse, we turn a dastardly sword against our own, while the masses of our countrymen who have suffered, who have been familiarised with such tortures that the most horrible death has no terror for them, while they struggle wildly and are lost, for want of the assistance which they had a right to expect from us, which we have refused them. I tell you, O'Neal, that my own Glensmen, whom I had thought to save and to serve, look on me with suspicion, as a coward, who will not risk life or property by putting himself at their head. They would not trust me now. They have ranked under other leaders. And I know that I have deserved it. I have earned it by my folly in hoping for humane measures from England. I stand alone now, shunned and suspected by both parties. Heaven knows that I have suffered, and acted for the best. But I tell you this solemnly, O'Neal: I would to God I had gone hand-in-hand from the first with Wolfe Tone and Lord Edward Fitzgerald."

Sir Archie suddenly stopped speaking, and buried his face in his hands.

"You are a madman!" cried Lord O'Neal, rising hastily. "You should know that when you speak in this manner your life is not worth a moment's purchase."

"I know it," said Sir Archie, rising also, and folding his arms calmly. "I know I am in your power. I knew it when I came here this evening, intending to avow to you all that was in my mind. As for my life," he added, bitterly, "a brave man will rather die than feel dishonoured, even if no one in the world know the dishonour but himself. It may be that I have precious stakes in life as well as another, that I had hopes as sweet as heaven, and plans which a proud old age might have rejoiced to see accomplished. Yet the beginning and end of all my hopes and plans are in this: I have loved my country, and I have loved my countrymen. Rather than turn a sword against my people, I will give my blood to slake the thirst of the government; as far as it will go."

Lord O'Neal had walked away to a window. By-and-by he came back with tears in his eyes, and trembling as only a good man can tremble.

"Munro," he said, "you are a brave fellow. Would to God we were all more like you! English gold has corrupted us; English smiles have lured us; English whips have scourged us; and English love has flattered us. We are like the house divided against itself that shall not stand. We are divided; and we shall be snapped in pieces like the streaks of flax that might have made a rope too tough for breaking. You and I have chosen different paths. But at least we are—brothers."

"Always, O'Neal," said Sir Archie, solemnly. And again the men pressed each other's hands.

"Not yet, Munro," said Lord O'Neal, as Sir Archie prepared to leave him. "I have still a word to say to you. Sit, and let us drink a glass together. We shall not drink such another for—how long? God knows! Futurity, even of a to-morrow, is strangely hid from us. When next we meet we shall know many things which we would now give much to discern."

And the lord looked dreamily across his glass, at the shadows falling gravely over the lough. Was any thought in his heart of the shadow of death so soon to descend upon the prime of his days? The death that was his portion as a son of a doomed land.

"I wanted to tell you," said his lordship, rousing himself from his reverie, "that it is supposed you have got a spy in your household."

"I think that can hardly be true," said Sir Archie, "for I know all the servants at Glenluce. They have each been many years a part of the family, and I am acquainted with their friends and connexions."

"This person is not a servant," said Lord O'Neal. "She is the friend of a Lady Humphrey, a woman who has been building up a case against you. Her name is Hester Cashel. She has hardly been a year at Glenluce; but I understand she has made the most of her time."

Sir Archie started. A flush came over his face, which had been so pale. Then he laughed a little short indulgent laugh at the ignorant folly of this news which his friend had just told him.

"It is a great mistake," he said, softly. "It is the perfection of a mistake. Any one inventing such a story ought to have chosen a better heroine."

Lord O'Neal was surprised at the change in his friend's manner. He looked at him with interest, and made a guess in his own mind.

"Well, I advise you to look to it," he said; "the name may be a mistake, but some one in your household is playing you false."

Soon after this it was dark, and the moon arose. Sir Archie mounted his horse, and Lord O'Neal walked by his side along the shores of the mysterious Lough Neagh. The warm still air was laden with the odours of the hawthorn and wild orange-tree. The moonlight came trickling through the shrouded glades; and afar off in the distance, the river could be discerned, dreaming beneath a coverlet of silver, under the watchful shadow of the pine-trees. Lord O'Neal walked to the spot where the rooks slept in their nests. An old rook, wakened by the sound of the feet and voices, hurled his cry of "war! war!" downward out of his branches on the heads of the passers-by; just as the friends clasped hands and parted.

CHAPTER XXV. LADY HUMPHREY'S MESSENGERS.

That terrible spell of quietude lasted for days in the North, while in the South towns were burned to the ground, and doings were

on foot, a whisper of which were enough to curdle the blood and make the heart turn sick. People seemed fixed in a sort of living death, during that fearful pause. They spoke in whispers, and their eyes were riveted in a horrible fascination on the future of every hour that approached. What was about to happen? When must it happen? The North men did not delay from mere sluggishness. They waited the signal of their leader. Antrim and Down had the knee bent, the bow strained. When would the awful oracle speak?

Loyal men put their heads together, and said, with bated breath, "They have not risen yet—they shall not rise." Lord O'Neal summoned a meeting of magistrates in his ancient town of Antrim, to be held on the seventh sunny day of that glorious glowing June. Then out spoke the oracle, and the flag of war was hoisted. The leader lifted his voice, and gave the signal to waiting thousands.

"To-morrow we march on Antrim," said his mandate; "drive the garrison of Randalstown before you, and haste to form a junction with the commander-in-chief. Dated, First day of Liberty, Sixth day of June, Seventeen hundred and ninety-eight."

Up rose the rebels. The fisherman left his boat, the smith his forge, the gardener left his roses to wither in the fierce sun, the farmer thought it little that his fields should be laid waste and his crops trampled down. What was a man, or what were his acres, to the future of the country? Oppression was to be grappled with, and driven out of the land. Men and men were to meet, and settle this old grudge. Who feared death, or cared for pain? The supreme moment of a life-long tragedy had arrived. Let the husband bid farewell to the wife, and the wife give up the husband. Let the women become strong as men, and the men patient as women. Let the God of nations, the God of armies, the long-enduring God of peace, judge this day between the weak and the strong.

Down they poured from glen and mountain, up they started from field and bog, those outraged long-suffering men. They grouped themselves into bands, and they massed themselves into columns. Their wrongs were in their hearts; desperation in their faces. Soon from high country and low country they were marching upon Antrim.

On the evening of the seventh of June dire tidings came flying through the glens. All day long the mountains had basked in the hot sun, and the golden clouds had brooded over them as luxuriously as if the world had entered into a long truce with evil—as if there were nothing to be thought of for futurity but the splendour and perfection of creation. An air of holiday repose sat smiling on the hills and the fields. There was no sound of labour, no sturdy steps tramping to and fro. It might have been a Sabbath, only there were no staid groups round the door of the little church, no laughing lingerers by the river, no neat-shod lasses stepping over the stiles. It was as if the valleys had opened and swallowed the inhabitants, leaving solitude and nature face to face.

In the gardens at the castle there were long hot yellow paths, and beds that were blazing heaps of colour, with here and there intense brown shadows huddled out of the way under a stooping frowsy bush, or a tree with sprawling branches. It was only June, but the roses had been born early this year, and already they thronged in full-blown multitudes, laying their hot cheeks together in the fiery air, or bearing down their branches, seeking moisture on the burning earth. And the gardener was not at hand, to give drink to the thirsty, to prop, nor to bind. There was no relief to be had for the most pampered blossom; no hand even to gather up her leaves when she fell. So it was not because of human bloodshed that the flowers faded and shrivelled as in fear. They merely sickened and drooped of individual neglect and ill-treatment. Neither when the throstles and the blackbirds were all mute the livelong day, was it because they could see horrid sights from their perch in the highest boughs. It was only that they were too faint and hot to sing.

Lady Helen had taken to her bed several days ago, and erected a strong wall of novels and smelling-bottles between herself and an unsympathising and most inconsiderate world. Her dogs lay on a cushion at her feet, and to these she made her moan; who could offer no irritating words of comfort in reply. Miss Golden was unwell, and there was not the slightest doubt but her disease was pure panic. She did not go to bed, however, nor did she make complaints. She held by her former assertion that she was not a coward. Her own particular woes relating to the lost Pierce and Hester's audacity, made some distraction for her thoughts, and divided her mind with the terror of the moment. It diverted her a little to annoy Hester. She could not forgive her for having possessed that well-known ring, still less for having so heartlessly returned it. She also held her guilty for having attracted the grave Sir Archie, and it piqued her curiosity that Hester's sentiments were secret on this subject. She could not even discover if the girl were conscious of the conquest she had made. At all events, it was a nice safe course to annoy the little minx. And in pursuance of this idea she kept Hester hard at work on the trousseau for an imaginary wedding.

So Hester sat in her tower-room sewing a bridal dress. The scanty curtains of tapestry—with their faces no longer nodding, in the absence of all breeze—were looped back far away from the window, the sash of which was open, vainly gaping for a draught of air. Hester, very pale, maybe with the heat, a little sick, maybe with the fright, sat puckering crisp white satin and fingering sumptuous lace. Her head was full of a strange mixture, enough to make a brain reel, of a wedding and finery, and flaming towns; of agonised wives and mothers, and strong men dying in their blood. And if sometimes tears would well up straight

out of her heart to her eyes with a keen pain, and drop about without a moment's notice, endangering the purity of the white satin, who, watching her from a corner, could have found fault with a sad seamstress, saying that it was a wicked thing to shed tears over a bridal dress? Who need speculate on those tears, foolishly asking what they meant? When sorrow was reigning from end to end of the land, why pry into one simple heart looking for secret sources of grief? Hester's tears, falling, kept time with the falling of the tears of a multitude. A few bitter drops more or less need make no wonder. Let them flow, and be swallowed up in the ocean of a nation's anguish.

The servants at the castle had taken to novel ways of life, and no one had heart to check them; even had any one had eyes to see that the wheels of the household needed oil. If they were seldom at their posts, there was no one to observe it; if they stood about in groups half the day with pale faces and red-rimmed eyes, there was no one at hand to reprimand them. If the meats came burnt to table and the wrong wine was decanted, was there any one with appetite to discover these mistakes? If the rarest gem of the drawing-room were swept down to the floor in fragments by a nervous twirl of Bridget's tremulous duster, who cared? The drawing-room was a desert. It might be arranged or it might not be arranged. The flowers in the vases might be dried up and mouldering there, for nobody thought of looking whether or not.

About sunset of that seventh glowing evening of June, Sir Archie was walking up and down his study floor. That long burning day had passed like a nightmare over his head. He had been abroad, and had looked upon the ominous desolation of his glens. He knew where his stalwart men were to be found, and he knew what was the work on which their strong hands had fastened.

A messenger came knocking upon the door of Glenluce Castle, and, panting, pushed his way into the presence of Sir Archie. He had news. A battle had been fought at Antrim—fought well by the rebels, but lost. Lord O'Neal had been carried to his castle to die. There had been another hard fight at Larne. A rumour was on foot that Sir Archie Munro had been declared to be a rebel; that Colonel Clavering and his soldiers were marching towards the glens to attack Glenluce Castle. The women and children, the old men and the cripples, were flying to Sir Archie for protection. Even now they left their cottages with their babies and their crutches. Even now they came breathless down the hills and up the roads. Would Sir Archie take them in under shelter of the castle roof? Would Sir Archie shield the innocent and weak?

"All that the castle will hold," said Sir Archie. "Let them come. We can house a good many, thank God! While there is space for one there cannot be enough; so we have elbow-room at the window to ply our guns."

He despatched a messenger to reassure the people, and then Sir Archie made a review of his position. Of able-bodied men he had only a few servants. He shuddered to think of the women of his family. Why had he not forced them to leave the country long ago? Regrets were idle now. His mother must be kept as long as possible in ignorance of what was impending. Thank God she was a willing prisoner in her own retired room. The young girls must be guarded. "I wonder," thought Sir Archie, "if poor Madge will stand my friend?" And he sent a message to the Honourable Madge.

The servant forgot her manners in her fright. She burst open Miss Madge's door without even the ceremony of a knock. Miss Madge had spent this day shut up in her chamber alone. Miss Madge! where was Miss Madge? Some gay garments stirred in a dark corner of the room. Miss Madge was on her knees, with her face against the wall. When might one pray if not now? Miss Madge had the soul of a warrior, but she might not wear a sword. Miss Madge had the heart of a lion, but the battles must rage on without her presence or her help. Miss Madge must give assistance, else she would die of this suspense. So she bent her knees on a hard floor, and turned her face to a dark wall, and she battered the gates of heaven with her prayers.

Miss Madge was on her feet in an instant, cheerful and alert. Ere long she had got instructions from Sir Archie, and was giving orders about the castle as if for a festival. She walked into Hester's room, where she found Hester and Miss Janet sitting trembling side by side; the unfinished bridal dress lying between them.

"We are going to stand siege, my dears," said the Honourable Madge, briskly, quite as if she had been saying, "We are going to give a ball." "The servants are a little frightened, naturally, and Lady Helen is not to know of it at present. There is much to be seen to, many arrangements to be made. Which of you is strong enough to step about and help me?"

"I am ill, Miss Madge," said Janet; "I am really ill." And she looked it. "I could not go about with you. I believe I shall die of the fright. I hope it may happen before they come up here to kill me. At all events I shall wait here. I could not go down and ask them to do it."

"I thought you were not a coward," said Miss Madge, with some scorn.

"That was a boast—only a boast!" wailed Miss Golden. "I did not think that war was going to walk up to the castle gates. I am a coward now I tell you. I am afraid. Oh, I am afraid!"

And she curled herself upon a sofa, and buried her blanched face in the cushions.

Miss Madge put her shoulder against the couch and wheeled it into a corner, out of reach of the window.

"What is this for?" asked Janet, pettishly.

"Only to be out of the way of bullets," answered the Honourable Madge, shortly.

A scream came from the sofa, followed by murmurings and mournings. "Oh, England! Oh, Pierce! Oh, wretched, wretched Janet!"

"I will send some one to sit with you," said Miss Madge, over her shoulder. Then, "Come," she said to Hester, "I see you are willing for work!" And grasping Hester's hand she led her off out of the room.

"We shall have to sort the people you know, my dear," said Miss Madge. "See how they begin to pour in! We shall have to set up a nursery, and dormitories for the sickly old men. Not that I expect there will be much sleep to be had here to-night, but it is better to be in order. Sir Archie is busy getting the guns fixed at the windows. I don't know that we can help him much at that. But there may be wounds to be dressed during the night. Do you happen to know anything of dressing a wound?"

"I have seen them dressed at the hospital," said Hester.

"My dear, that is most fortunate. We shall prepare some linen bands, and I will boil some healing herbs."

They went out to a kitchen garden to pluck the herbs, on a high ground away at the back of the castle. A solemn moon had risen, and the world was calm and cool. The soft velvet outline of the hills rose darkly against the mellow sky. All the perfume was streaming out of the flowers with the dew. The hammering at the windows where the guns were getting fixed was the only sound heard, except now and then at intervals the lowing of the cattle, coming down with its homely echo from the mountains.

Hester mounted on a bench, and looked around her. "What are those lights, Miss Madge," she said, fearfully—"those lights that are smouldering on the hills? How they spring up! And another, and another! Good God! the flames are everywhere!"

"Those are the cottages—fired," said Miss Madge. "Don't faint, child—don't faint, I tell you. You can be brave if you wish. Will you be brave? Are you brave?"

"Yes," gasped Hester. "It is only the first shock."

"Good girl!" said Miss Madge, approvingly, brandishing her bunch of fresh herbs in Hester's face to revive her. "My dear, we are living in history—in the history of our time."

CHAPTER XXVI. FIRE AND SWORD.

The enemy was approaching. The people kept pouring in, frantic with terror, crouching into the corners which Miss Madge assigned to them. Wailing children, fainting mothers, mourning old men, and weeping girls. The windows were barricaded, except just where the guns protruded. Sir Archie, with his few assistants, stood ready at their posts. After a horrible spell of suspense the soldiers could be heard mustering without, more and more arriving, trampling of hundreds of feet, prancing and floundering and terrible jingling of cavalry, shouting of fierce orders, oaths and triumphant menaces, and hideous mirth, and, finally, the opening roar of the guns.

Sir Archie replied gallantly to the salute. A hurried glance below smote his heart with the forlornness of his hope. Yet his courage did not fail. How were the soldiery to know that but a crowd of helpless people and a handful of strong men were all the force that opposed them from those windows? If but the fire could be kept up! Every morsel of metal about the castle was seized upon as treasure, and Hester and Miss Madge got a lesson in making bullets. A crippled old soldier, who had fought bravely for England in his youth, taught them and helped them. And so the night wore on. A piteous crowd half dead with fear, and so, happily, dumb; half a dozen grim desperate men feeding their guns; two screaming women, mad with terror, shut up in their several rooms with their attendants; two other women, pallid faces soiled with smoke, low steady voices, hearts braced up with courage for the emergency, swift steps and blackened hands, toiling over a fire in a kitchen making bullets; nimble-footed boys, who were the making of brave men, running swiftly up and down, carrying fragments of new-found lead, bearing the newly-fashioned slugs up to the gunners; barricaded windows, darkness, deadly silence, smothered shrieks, muttered prayers, groans, and again silence, with over all the sickening, maddening roar of the assault, with the pressing, and the trampling, and the threatening of the assailants. These things were known within the castle. A glimpse of the scene without was like the opening up of hell: the glare of fire everywhere upon hosts of devilish faces, upturned, thirsting for blood.

"Miss, miss!" said a voice at Hester's elbow. It was Pat, the good-natured butler.

"I'm makin' bould to spake up sharp to you, miss," said Pat. "There's not a blessed minute to be lost. I tell ye this is a more sarious business than we tuk it for at the startin'. There's swarms and swarms o' them out bye, an' there's new ones comin' on, hivir' over the lawns, an' the roads. I tell ye, miss, it's Sir Archie they want, an' ye must coax him to make off. I ax yer pardon, miss, but there's nobody could coax him but yerself. There's a smart trusty boy, with a stout bit of a boat, lyin' waitin' at the shouldher of the bay. He can get off out o' the back, an' creep along the ould moat. The divil a sight they'll see o' him, an' we'll keep the guns blazin'. The sea's like Lough Neagh, an' there's not a breath o' wind. A stout couple o' oars will take him across to the Mull o'Cantire afore he's missed!"

"I'll tell him," said Hester.

"An' miss, I ax yer pardon. I mane ye well; feth I do! But it 'd be as good if ye'd go with him. They're havin' it goin' that it was stories ye wrote to England that has brought down the murther on the masther. An' if the boys comes to believe it, they'll want to tear ye!"

"That is nonsense," said Hester. "A wild

lie. It is nothing. I am going to tell Sir Archie."

He was still working with the guns. "Sir Archie!" she said. He could not hear her for the noise he was making. "Sir Archie!" she said, louder, and touched him on the arm to make him look up.

"Hester!" he said. "Good God! My poor child!"

"There is a boat and a boatman at the curve of the bay," she said. "If you are gone, they will not hurt us. Fly!"

"That is a mistake," he said. "They would not know I had gone, and they would hurt you all the same. It will make no difference to them my being here. It would make all the difference to you. I will not fly."

The stars had long hidden themselves in terror. The moon had grown whiter and whiter, and turned her face away; the bullets from the castle failed at last; even the buttons from the men's coats were getting rammed into the guns. There was the silence of despair within the castle, till a shriek suddenly arose that the building was in flames. Steady curling jets of fire began to arise towards the sky. At the same time a fresh band of cavalry came dashing up the road. The captain of this troop pressed frantically near the walls, and flung himself from his horse under the eyes of Colonel Clavering.

"This is a mistake!" cried Pierce Humphrey; "a devilish, detestable mistake! This is a loyal household. I tell you it is a hideous mistake. All I hold dear; the woman I love; an Englishwoman—*English*, I tell you—is shut up in these burning walls. Call off your men!" stamping at the colonel—"call off your wolves, your hell-hounds!"

"They are hell-hounds," said Clavering, "and they will not be called off. These mistakes are common. Save whom you can."

Breaches had now been made in the castle. Terror-stricken creatures came flying out upon the bayonets that were waiting for them. Pierce Humphrey and a band of his men pressed in upon an errand of mercy. Other soldiers pressed in whose errand was not mercy. The triumph of the night were not complete unless the marked man, whose death had been the stake for which this noble game was played, were handsomely treated to torture, and most certainly given to death. So the soldiers braved the flames, and pressed in.

Sir Archie was still at his forlorn post. It seemed that he did not know yet that the castle was burning. Nor did Hester, who stood by his side, rending iron buttons from a pile of garments that lay at her feet, and handing them over to Sir Archie as sorry food for the guns. They two were alone in the room. All their companions were either killed or had fled.

The door was burst open, and a group of soldiers dashed in. The wind that came with them blew out the light in the room. Hester shrank back in horror, and retreated, with her hands spread before her, till she reached the furthest wall of the chamber. It was an old-fashioned, long, low bedroom, and the walls were hung with silk. Hester's hand came against the loose hangings, and by instinct or inspiration she crept in behind their folds.

There was a terrible confusion in her head for some moments, but she knew pretty well that Sir Archie had been seized. She heard the soldiers cursing at the darkness, and one of them pulled away the barricading from the window. He fell as he did so by a shot from without. Now the flames, which seemed to have been licking round the roof, curled inward through the open window and caught the woodwork of the room. The shock of the sudden light restored Hester to her senses. She heard the soldiers jeering and exulting over Sir Archie.

"We'll not cut him off in his sins," said one. "He'll have time to say his prayers."

"A fine easy death," said another; "not a scrape on his skin."

And by-and-by she knew they had taken themselves off—out of the burning room. She stepped out from her hiding-place into the glare. Sir Archie was tied with strong cords, bound hand and foot, on the floor. The fire was creeping near him. They had left him so to its will. A few fierce vain struggles, a few bitter groans, and then Hester feared he had swooned. Not so; for he felt her soft hand moving about him, passing over his shoulders, and under his arms, and round his neck, as with swift sharp snaps she cut the cords away from his limbs. In a few more moments he was on his feet, safe by her side. He had taken her into his arms close to his heart—there, in the glow of the burning room. But that was only folly when there was not a moment to be lost.

"Come quickly!" said Hester. "That boat may be waiting yet!"

LEAVES FROM THE MAHOGANY TREE.

MAKING GAME OF A VERY SERIOUS SUBJECT.

There is a club tradition that the lord-lieutenant of one of the western counties, in the reign of the good and great (corporeally great) George the Fourth, used to devour a whole covey of partridges for breakfast every day during the season. It positively took the entire time of an able-bodied Somersetshire gamekeeper and two well-bred pointers to supply the honourable gentleman's morning meal alone. Metaphorically speaking, the honourable gentleman was pelted constantly with roast partridges, which he caught in his ravening jaws just as a French poodle would macaroons. There never was so hearty an eater, except Brillat-Savarin's friend, who, for the first time in his life being treated to his satiety of green oysters, ate eighteen dozen as a whet, and then, finding his appetite not a bit the better, began his dinner in disgust—like Mr. Hayward's Scotchman, of the rigorous viscera, after a tough old Solan goose.

Now, though from an economical, moral restraint, self-denying point of view, the honourable gentleman, whom an American would have justly called "a whale at partridges," was a glutton, still, as a gourmet, we venerate his memory; he must have been a great, if not altogether a good, man, for if there *is* a plump, delicious, appetising dish in the world, it is a well roasted, little, young hen partridge. The month is now September, and walking all day over hair-brushes—viz. wheat stubble—has sharpened your naturally keen appetite to an almost dangerous edge. Then with your gun in the corner, your shooting-boots warming themselves against the fender for another day's work, and a pleasant friend opposite, you could eat a live horse, you would not stick at hashed hippopotamus; but you have a dish of smoking partridges before you, a small sea of delicious bread-sauce, and a little Greek hand-lamp full of gravy clear as Madeira; you are a man whose cornucopia of happiness a kind fate has for the moment brimmed almost to overflowing. It is in the very essence of real sporting that Nimrod, as well as Ramrod, should make his meal of the game he has spent the day in chasing. The ruffling walks among the long wet green and sallow turnip-leaves, and the bristling hair-brushes aforesaid, the peering over brows of hills, the keen watching of your favourite liver-coloured pointer, require, as a fitting consummation, the solemn sacrifice of the kitchen. The swift bright-eyed bird that this morning broke screeching over the stubbles with all his flurried ladies of the harem (as frightened as the Arabs in Vernet's picture of the Smala), lies now before you featherless, his bright eyes are shrivelled cinders, with a drop of gravy distilling sweetly from each, his neck is a corkscrew, his legs are crossed in mute and changeless gesture of humility and supplication. He is now an abstract article of food; motion, volition, gone; no fear, no love, no hatred. He lies there on his back, a mere delicious offering to the sense of taste. Carve him fair, that's all, and don't meanly hide away a wing under the débris as our friend Gorbly does when he carves, in order to discover it with triumphant wonder just after he has helped us to the forlorn wreck of the back, which has been lying on the dish for some time in front of the ambuscaded wing.

And here allow us to bait for a moment at the roadside inn of an episodical remark—one affectionate word to young and inexperienced persons beginning life, on carving. Remember the wise dictum of Dr. Johnson (who, by-the-by, was purblind, and could not help himself), "Pray consider, sir, the great utility of the decorums of life; cease to disparage them, sir, and let me no longer hear your sneers against the art of carving; you should praise not ridicule your friend, who carves with as much earnestness of purpose as though he were legislating. Whatever is to be done at all should always be well done." Good carving is the father of economy; a well carved joint goes further, and is far better fare than meat mangled, chopped, and mashed. Bad carving is an insult to your guests (as Ude said, far more forcibly than Dr. Johnson, who, worthy old gentleman, to tell the real truth, did not quite know what he was talking about); "it is also inconsistent with good manners and economy, and evinces in those who neglect it not only a culpable disrespect to the opinion of the world, but carelessness, inaptitude, and indifference to an object of real utility."

Now let us return to covert, and pick up the covey again as quickly as possible. In the first place, as to choosing partridges in shops. The following rules are from the mouth of one of our most eminent French cooks. Young birds are known by their yellowish claws; grey, or even bluish, legs and claws may be of a tender age, but lamentably seldom. If the bird is tender, the beak should be black, and the extreme tip point of the wing bone sharp pointed and whitish. Old partridges are only fit for hiding away in consommés, in cabbages, purées of lentils, sauces, or cold patties. The best partridges in France are those of Cahors in Languedoc, and the Cévennes. In the north of France those of Carhaix carry away the palm. The red-legged partridges, so common in the south of France, are abominated by our sportsmen, because they run for ever without rising. The white partridges, found only in the Alps and in the Pyrenees, are the most esteemed; the grey are of far less value. French cooks applaud the red-legged bird (the bartavelle) as having whiter and more delicate flesh than its grey and snowy cousins.

Perhaps a partridge cannot be cooked too simply. He is beautiful in his integrity. Still he is dainty larded (piqué or bardé); and they do wisely, who advise us to wrap the savoury and juicy bird in vine-leaf winding-sheets, which concentrate the flavour and retain the volatile essences. He is good, too, à la Polonaise, à l'Orange, à la prévalie, with parmesan, with truffles, en biberot, and in curling-papers. He makes a soup, a hot pie, and a famous vol-au-vent, with tomatoes. The partridge pies of Cahors and Perigord are as admirable as the terrines of Nérac, in which the happy partridges repose on beds of truffles and truffles on layers of partridges, alternately. The heads emerge from the centre of the pies like weathercocks, and are at once an ornament and an invitation. The ways of cooking partridge are innumerable; the complaisant bird lends itself to many pleasant disguises. Partridges are charming à la braise and à la daube, exquisite with carp sauce, not bad à maître Lucas, and delicious à la Çzarine and à l'étouffade. The partridges à la Montmorenci are larded, then stewed, and served with a ragoût à la financière. The true French cook often tries to minister to the sense of sight at the same time that he titillates the palate, just as the clumsier Elizabethan cooks delighted in perfuming their dishes, so as at once to gratify the nose and charm the mouth.

On this principle the inventor of "Perdraux à la Barberie" stuck his birds over with small pieces of truffles in the shape of nails. They should be stuffed with chopped truffles and rasped bacon, and served with Italian sauce. The perdraux à la crapaudine are dipped in bread crumbs and then broiled. In the perdreaux à la Givry (another dish for the eye as well as the mouth) the birds are mosaicked with rings of white onions, and black medallions of truffles. In the compote des perdreaux you stew the dear creatures with bacon, mushrooms, and small white onions. Old partridges boil well with cabbage. The sauté of partridges, too (fillets stewed with veal and ham), is by no means despicable, nor would Lucullus himself have despised partridge cutlets fried in crumbs and treated "en epigramme" with truffles and mushrooms. The soufflé of partridges is excellent; the flesh requires to be chopped and pounded, mixed with the yolks of five beat-up eggs, and lightly baked for twenty minutes. The purée and salmi of partridge are also savoury, but we prefer partridge puddings, and Ude highly recommends "the quenelles de perdreaux à la Sefton." These are made with the flesh of tender young partridges pounded and passed through a sieve; you mix with it eggs, pepper, salt, and allspice, and fill small puddings with the paste. For the sauce, use the world-famous Béchamel, cream, salt, and a little cayenne. The Jew Apella himself would not disbelieve in this dish.

A pheasant is a divine fowl—Colchis, or wherever he first rocketted from.

> If the partridge had but the woodcock's thigh,
> He'd be the best bird as ever did fly,

might be said with more justice of the partridge if he had only made up his little mind to be as big as a turkey, and yet preserved that inimitable flavour, gleaned from the healthy wheat-stubbles. A pheasant resembles a medlar in this, that he is insipid till he begins to decompose. A sure test of knowing when your bird is ripe (generally about six days) is to hold him by the leg. If blood drops from the beak he is ready; to the spit with him incontinently—for the hour and the bird have come. Another good test is to hang your pheasant up in the larder by his long, auburn-coloured, tail feathers; cook him the moment the feathers drop out and let their master fall. Be sure he falls soft. The best proof of a young bird is the shortness and obtuseness of the claw. Always choose a hen, if you can, for the feminine among pheasants, contrary to the ungallant Latin grammar rule, is more worthy than the masculine. It is difficult, French cooks say, in our damp climate to keep the pheasant long enough to develop the full game flavour.

The Parisians wrap their roasting pheasants in sheets of buttered paper, and their favourite sauces for the royal bird are verjuice or orange juice, and sauce de carpe. The pheasant is inimitable à la braise in filets, in pies, in salmi, in croquettes, hashed, in soufflés, in cutlets, or in scollops. The good old English rule for a pheasant is forty minutes before a smart but not a fierce fire. And here a wrinkle, if you are not an artful man or woman. We can assure you, from experience, that such is the deceptive power of the imagination, that if you have only one pheasant for a dinner party, and want two, a fine young fowl kept for five days, and with his head twisted exactly like the real Simon Pure, will never be discovered under a friendly snow-drift of fragrant bread sauce. As a rule, all entrées that are made with partridges can be made also of pheasants, and the petit deuil (half mourning), Monglas, Givry, &c., are equally good, of whichever bird they are made.

The French cooks rejoice sometimes over the vast carcase of that European ostrich, the brainless Bustard—a bird of vast body, but diminutive mind. The last one known in England was killed, we believe, on the windy surface of Salisbury Plain, in the middle of last century, rather after the time the last wolf died in Scotland, and half a dozen centuries after the last beaver in Wales had expired, universally lamented. It is only after very rigorous winters that the bustard is ever found in the South of France; but, in 1804, they were not uncommon at Beziers, where competing gourmands used to offer as much as thirty-six livres for each. Bustards also came to Paris from Champagne, and frequently from the great plain of Chalons, which suited their habits and their extreme dulness. The camp has, no doubt, long ago made the once lonely plain undesirable. Young and well hung, the bustard is tasty; the flesh, it is asserted, combines the flavours of several sorts of game. It is generally roasted like wild goose, but sometimes eaten cold in pies, which, however, require a great generosity in lard, as bustard meat is by nature dry, and rather indigestible.

The French call the woodcock, who is all nose (as everybody knows), and is not remarkable for very regular features, the king of the marsh and the woodside—"le premier des oiseaux noirs." It is the choicest morsel of the gourmet, who loves it for its perfect flavour, the volatility of its principles, and the succulence of its flesh. It is the highest mark of esteem we can offer to a guest who may be useful to us. We devour even the humblest portions of his body—we honour him with far more reason than the Thibet people do their taciturn grand Llama. It is admirable en salmi, stuffed with truffles (this is, however, adding perfume to the violet); and fine with olives, à la Provençale, or à l'Espagnole. Finally, pounded, it becomes a purée, which even French cooks consider as the consummation of all luxury. Woodcocks should be eaten in solemn silence, and with all the honours, as the plat des plats. They hash well; they are superb en croustades. They are good in every way. One great authority particularly praises "the salmi de becasses, à la Lucullus;" in this dish the fillets are sauced with pounded mushrooms, shallots, and parsley.

A hare that has run himself tender has, no

doubt, suffered much, but, nevertheless, by his sufferings has benefited the human race, and undoubtedly advanced civilisation. In buying a hare, however, throw overboard all sentiment, and concentrate your mind upon this simple question: Is there a small nut in the first joint of his fore claw? If it be there, the creature is still young and inexperienced—if it be gone, concentrate your mind again, whatever labour the effort may cost you, and turn the claws sideways. If the joint crack, that is a sign that, though not so young as he might be, the hare is still tender. If there be no nut, and moreover the claw do not crack, the hare is only fit to stew, or for soup, and he won't be, even in that way, so good as he might be. Everybody has some favourite dish, for which, in a weak moment, he might be induced to sell his reversionary interests, as the patriarch weakly did for the mess of pottage—that dish is in our case leveret, savoury meat, sweet, tender, encouraging. Of hares, those three-parts grown are the best. Mountain hares are better than hares from downs. This amiable creature adapts himself to almost any sauce; and, in spite of the learned opinion of Sancho Panza's Baratarian physician, who thought the meat terrestrial and melancholic, is one of the most digestible of viands.

The rabbit is, to his cousin the hare, what the fowl is to the pheasant. His flesh is white and more juicy, but is more insipid. If a hare's ear tear easily, his flesh will be tender. Dr. Kitchener has observed, that if the jaws of a rabbit yield to the pressure of the thumb and finger, the rabbit is young; if old, the jaw will not break. This is worth remembering.

The wild rabbit, browsing at daybreak and twilight on wild thyme, marjoram, and such odoriferous herbs, unconsciously devotes the best part of his life to educating himself for the spit and the saucepan. The Parisians, who justly despise tame rabbits, as cat-like monstrosities, tasting only of the cabbage on which they have been nurtured, disguise rabbit in half a hundred artful and picturesque ways, each better than the other: à la broche, en gibelotte, fricassée, à la Polonaise, à l' Italienne, à l'Espagnole, à la Rossane, au coulis de lentilles, in puddings, in the shape of eye-glasses and in curling-papers. One eminent writer on French cooking observes, that various celebrated old methods of cooking rabbits have now become unfashionable; but after all their kick-shaws, between ourselves there is nothing better than the sterling old English ways: the young rabbit fried in bread-crumbs, and its dryness relieved with liver sauce; the young boiled rabbit, moist and white, soused in white floods of thick and odorous onion sauce.

You may flavour and mingle each dish as you will,
Yet the rabbit with onions is best of them still.

Another wrinkle. Most people like hare-soup, undoubtedly a thick, brown, high-flavoured compound; and when badly made, rather a burnt, pasty, and oppressive soup; still, if fair play be shown, highly nutritious, and of a strong individual character. But on the word of an old epicure, of now seventy summers, hare-soup cannot be compared to rabbit, which must be first fried and then boiled down with slow consideration, after the usual conditions. It is milder and more balmy than hare-soup, and possesses a much finer and more exquisite flavour. We know no game-soup that can equal it.

In Patrick Lamb's highly curious Royal Cookery, 1710, the master cook of Charles, James, William, and Anne—he must have had some experience in delicacies—speaks very favourably of a now forgotten dish, which he is pleased to entitle "Rabbit Surprise." Let us dig up the recipe from the small Pompeii of one hundred and twenty-seven pages, for it sounds promising.

Cut all the meat from the backs of two half-grown rabbelets (that is not a bad word for young rabbit?), cut it in small slices, and toss it up in six spoonfuls of cream, with a bit of butter the size of half an egg (pullet's, not ostrich's), and a little nutmeg, pepper, and salt. Thicken this with a dust of flour, boil it up and set it to cool, then take some forced-meat made of veal, bacon, suet, the crumbs of French roll, raw eggs, parsley, onion, pepper, salt, and nutmeg, toss it up like the meat aforesaid, and place it round your rabbits. Then fill up the trough in the backs of the patient creatures with the prepared minced-meat and sauce, smooth it square at both ends, brush the top with a raw egg, and sprinkle grated bread over. Place them on a mazarine or patty-pan, and bake them for three-quarters of an hour, till they are a gentle brown. The sauce required is butter, gravy, and lemon; the garnishing, orange and fried parsley. By no means bad, we are strongly inclined to think!

The wild duck's bones are true thermometers, and regulate his winter flights. Even the French cooks allow that this inimitable and venerated bird is best eaten plain roasted, with a few tears of lemon dropped upon his brown smoking breast. The Bernardin monks were, however, fond of him in an appetising hash, the recipe for which was a special secret of the devout order. The finest sauce we know for duck, or any wild fowl, is one that Dr. Kitchener derived from Major Hawker, the celebrated sporting writer. It is perfect. Man wants but little here below, but this sauce he must have. A celebrated cook of 1816 used to charge a fee of a guinea for disclosing it. It would make even a politician who had ratted swallow all his early speeches. Here it is, for nothing. "One glass of port wine, one spoonful of caviare, one ditto of catsup, one ditto of lemon-juice, one slice of lemon-peel, one large shalot sliced, four grains of *dark* cayenne pepper (not Venetian red and brickdust), and two blades of mace. Scald and strain this, and add it to the pure gravy of the bird. Serve the duck (if it be a duck) in a silver dish, with a lamp under it, and let this sauce gently simmer

round it." The duck, who spends his useful life in flitting from lake to brook in search of rush-buds and olive-brown watercresses, would (if he could but taste this sauce) rejoice in being so embalmed, and exult in being so honoured. The teal used to be, and we have no doubt still is, slyly eaten by the self-denying Carthusians and Carmelites on fast days, it being Jesuitically regarded as an aquatic bird, and therefore half a fish. Saint Liguori, the most accomplished of casuists, especially rejoiced in this ingenious evasion of the severe laws of Lent. It is not impossible that he himself first drove the poulterer's cart through the Pope's decrees on this point. This evasive bird is gratefully cooked with olives, or truffles, with thistles, with oysters, with cauliflowers, and it is good in pâtés and in terrines.

The quail, humbly supine on his little mattress of transparent bacon, is an object agreeable to three senses. Enveloped in lard, or clothed with a vine-leaf, the plump little creature is equally delectable. A good roast of quails, even in Paris, costs more than two fat fowls (and this is no joke, for there are places where one fat capon can cost as much as twelve shillings). Of the French quails, the best are those of Montredon, near Marseilles. There are a thousand ways of disguising them; with beef marrow, truffles, herbs, and mushrooms; they are good à la braise, à la poêle, au gratin (with crumbs), with cabbages, or with lentils coulis. In the lark season it is not uncommon at hotels to disguise larks as quails, but an epicure, even though blind, could tell the difference; for though the lark is much in esteem with poets, and is indeed decidedly a quiet, amiable, well-disposed, and even respectable bird, he is only a toothpick, a mere pastime, in comparison with the exquisite bird that fed the Israelites in the desert.

One of the greatest efforts of Ude's life was the construction of an enormous game-pie, which the Earl of Sefton wished to present to the appreciative corporation of Liverpool. This pie was to be a monster proof of the author's learning and generosity. Its contents were to be of the best; it was to overflow with good things; it was to be an Amalthea's horn, brimming with bonne-bouches. One fine morning, inspired by the sunshine that streamed round him as he stood monarch of all he surveyed in the earl's kitchen—M. Louis Eustache Ude, formerly cook of Louis the Sixteenth—collected around him great piles of game, poultry, veal, ham, bacon, forcemeat, and truffles. His caskets of spices stood near him, open, a bin of flour was at hand, and huge rolls of flower-scented Devonshire butter were within call. Let us follow the alchemist of the kitchen through all his enchantments, for even to think of them with the mind's eye—if the mind's eye can think, which we do not feel quite certain about—gives one the keenest seaside appetite. Ude first buttered a large brazier pan, and then lined it as one would line a hat, with a thin unctuous sheet of fat bacon. In the centre, he gravely placed a very large turkey, breast downward, well larded, and stuffed with four very fine boned and larded pullets, seasoned with salt, pepper, and allspice, and with forcemeat laid in the trenches of the backs. The great composer then deposited round the patriarch turkey, the centre of all, eight boned and larded pheasants, seasoned and stuffed with truffles, and inside each pheasant was a boned and larded partridge, on the principle of the Chinese puzzle, and promising well for the future. The chinks and cavities were filled in with truffles, calf's liver, bacon, livers of game and fowls, and the white flesh and dark opaque livers of six rabbits, which had been chopped into forcemeat to garnish the monster corporation pie. But this was a mere sketch at present. The troops were on the ground, it is true, but the real battle had yet to be won. A shovel of coals too much on the oven-fire, and the splendour of a Sefton might be doomed to dust and ashes. Ude, gay and sanguine, then stuffed in a good deal of larded veal, some special wedges of ham, and twenty pounds of fragrant and carefully culled truffles. He covered the whole with a sheet of fat bacon, seasoning it all over; he parted from it with a longing lingering look; and hermetically closing the brazier by putting a paper all round the cover, put it in the oven for a fiery probation of two hours. It was then allowed to get quite cool, and was tempered by imprisonment in an ice-house to make it thoroughly cold. Ude then dipped the braizer into warm water to loosen the contents, and, the first stage of the work of art being over, he removed the gravy and fat, and put the meat, &c., into a temporary purgatory of ice.

The paste had now to be made. He first threw about a coal-scuttle full of flour into a vast earthen bowl, and prepared the butter in a stew-pan with boiling water and some salt. The flour was beaten up into a paste with a giant wooden spoon, then worked on the dresser, and placed before the fire for a moment, covered with a cloth, to help the manipulation. So far, so good. Ude felt like Phidias, when chiselling out the form of Apollo, or like Cellini, when in the fiery agony of casting his famous statue of Perseus. The fate of Europe seemed to hang upon that pie. Heaven only knew what indigestions among the worthy corporation the failure of that paste might not occasion. Ude next spread on the honoured table of the venerated earl, a large thick sheet of paste, and moulded the inner walls of the treasure-house of delicacies. The iced meat was already firm, and jellied together to receive its envelope, which Ude skilfully lapped over the top. He then covered the top with a second vast sheet, and pasted it down over the first, shaping it as he did so, and moulding the walls with architectural hand and dexterous masonic fingers. When form and symmetry were obtained, Ude squeezed out of the fat putty-like paste, a projecting border to form the foot, and with nimble fingers pinched out a border and cornice-rims for the top. With

a large ring of paste the Ulysses of the kitchen framed a chimney to the pie, as a sort of ventilating shaft, and also shaped a garland of sharp myrtle-like leaves to wreath the ring and chimney aforesaid, while all around he wove a trellis-work of brittle thread, and spread vine-leaves of paste, and made a sort of low wall round the flue, to prevent the gravy and fat from boiling over, and so spoiling the monster corporation pie. The great work was now nearly accomplished; it only wanted two or three finishing touches from the master-hand. Ude brushed the pie with dorure, and then gravely and thankfully placed it in a moderate and carefully-tempered oven. It took three long hours, and it was all the fire could do in that time to blend those flavours and soften those intermingled meats. Before he withdrew it from the oven, Ude, ever cautious, thrust with thoughtful probe into the chimney of the monster, a long keen larding-pin, to make the final assay, and try if the meat were soft enough and thoroughly done down to the lowest stratum. He next, with learned unction and placid triumph, added, down the funnel, the gravy and fat hoarded from the brazier. He also made a jelly of bones of fowls, rabbits, turkeys, and pheasants, and some knuckle of veal and ham highly seasoned with spice, bay-leaves, sweet basil, thyme, cloves, mace, cayenne, and plenty of salt. Then reducing this jelly, part of it was poured, when boiling, into the pie. This pie took two days to become cold. It required great care to lift, as it was too heavy for one French cook. The remaining jelly was spread over the pie when it was opened. It was indeed a veritable chef-d'œuvre, reflecting much credit on Ude's heart, but more upon his head. It gave great satisfaction to the generous earl, who, as the cruel wits said, had intended giving the town a library, but was convinced that the pie would be more appreciated.

BOOKBINDING.

Bookbinding comes to glory among us once a year, at the approach of Christmas. Many people look upon it as quite a secondary art, but true lovers of books justly consider it to be a most important branch of bibliophily, which has had as yet but few, if any, historians. No indications as to the origin, the progress, the rise, or the decline of that art, so deserving of study, not only on its own account, but also by reason of the great masters it has produced, are to be found in those bibliographic works where one would chiefly expect to find them. A Frenchman, M. de Gauffremont, wrote some two centuries ago a Treatise on the Art of Binding, and a M. Jauglon, a fellow-countryman of his, attempted a few years later to handle the same subject; there was also a Booke of Counselles to Bookebinders published in London by one James Eddowes in 1643. But all these works, together with a few others by authors unknown, were simply books of technical advice or criticism; they did not profess to deal with the historical side of the art, and such copies of them as were circulated have now become so rare, that not even the best of national libraries, in England or on the Continent, are to be found provided with them. We have thought, therefore, that it might prove interesting to hear a few details, not upon the manner and fashion of binding books, but upon the various phases of success or failure, progress or retrogression, through which the art has had to pass.

Amongst the ancients (whose manuscripts were not of paper) binding did not exist. It is easy to understand this by recollecting the usages of the times. When men wrote upon the skin of fishes, upon linen, upon leaves, upon the bark of trees, upon ivory, upon stone, and upon metals, it was both useless and impossible to bind. The most that could be done was to collect some of the pieces of bark or fish-skin together, and to string them by files after cutting them of a size. But even this was rarely done, and the bookshelves of an Assyrian, an Egyptian, or an early Greek scholar must have been a scene of confusion indeed. At the time when Pharaoh, and afterwards Cheops, distributed stripes with an unsparing hand to the children of Israel, it had already become the fashion in Egypt to write upon thin planks of wood. By writing we mean here, of course, those strange hieroglyphics of birds, sphinxes, and other monstrosities which it has taken Europe some three thousand years to decipher. Writing as we understand it now was not known then, and as the painting of birds, winged beasts, and men with hawks' heads demanded a great deal of time and pains, literary matter was both rare and costly; rich men alone could pretend to a collection of poems, and books of divination; a thousand planks, of a foot square each, containing the substance of perhaps a dozen modern octavos, was considered a right princely library, and it would have been thought as bad as hiding a light under a bushel to have concealed any of these treasures from view by an attempt at binding. On the contrary, the custom was to bore a hole through the painted planks, and to hang them up by strips of leather in conspicuous places about the house. When any one wished to read he unhooked one of the planks, as people now-a-days do the bill of fare in a club dining-room, and as soon as he had had enough of it he put the thing back, and passed on to another plank.

The Chinese were undoubtedly the first nation to fabricate paper, and hence must have been also the first people to practise bookbinding. At what precise date paper was first made in China it is not very easy to determine, but a material very much resembling our straw paper, although yellower in colour and more flimsy to the touch, seems to have been in use before the Christian era. European travellers, D'Umont d'Urville amongst the number, bear witness to having

seen amongst the family treasures of wealthy mandarins books that had been handed down from father to son during centuries, and nothing in these works afforded any semblance that they had been amongst the first books ever published in the land. Some of them were thinly bound in plaited rice-straw covered over with figured satin, but one or two were bound in wood, painted, gilt, and enriched with carvings. Copies of the works of Lao-tsen, Meng-tsen, and Koung-tsen (Laotius, Mencius, and Confucius), evidently of great antiquity, were likewise found in the summer palace at Pekin a few years ago, and the binding in every case was such as to do honour to the artists, whoever they were, and whatever may have been the epoch of their existence.

But perhaps we shall do well to confine our notice of bookbinding to Europe, for, in the absence of any certain documents to record the march of civilisation in China and Japan, during the long period of time when these nations were unknown to the rest of the world, all statements concerning their inventive skill must be more or less hypothetical. When the history of the Celestial Empire becomes better known to us, as it no doubt will in a few years, we shall probably be surprised to find that the humblest of Chinese peasants were possessed of well-bound books at a time when our haughty mediæval barons were unable to sign their names. As it is, we can state, upon the testimony of well-nigh all the authors who have written upon China, that there are three volumes that have been favoured by succeeding generations of Chinese boys and girls from time out of date; three books of which every Chinese palace and cottage has owned a copy (and probably a bound copy) since four hundred years and more; and these are San Koué-tchi (History of the three Kingdoms), a work dear to soldiers as well as schoolboys from the tales of war and strife therein; Fa-youen-thou-tin (The Forest of Pearls of the Garden of the Law); and Si-Siang-ki (History of the Eastern Bower), the pet tale of Chinese young ladies.

At Athens, in the time of Pericles, it was customary to write either upon thin sheets of ivory or upon tablets of wood spread over with wax. This latter, as the most economical, was naturally the most prevalent method. Authors, philosophers, wits, and scholars, walked about with their ivory or wooden tablets under their tunics, and whenever they desired to note down anything, they did so by means of a pointed stylet made of gold, silver, or steel. It was the melting and soiling properties of the wax that led to the first European attempts at binding. The young gentlemen who attended the "At homes" of Aspasia, were too particular to suffer stains of grease upon the spotless folds of their garments, and the idea occurred to them of enclosing their waxen tablets between two slender sheets of ivory, gold, or silver. The fashion "took;" it was found that the two plates of metal not only preserved the wax from the heat, but also kept the letters traced upon it from being obliterated by the air or the dust. Gradually, all authors fell into the habit of writing their treatises or plays upon wax tablets of an equal size, and then, pressing all the tablets together between two sheets of wood or metal; so that, seen from a distance, an Athenian work of four hundred or three hundred B.C., must have looked pretty much like a book upon a modern drawing-room table.

However, the reign of wax as a material to write on did not last long. The Romans inaugurated the use of parchment, which gave an immense stimulus to scribbling, for parchment was considerably cheaper than wax, and much easier to carry. But the introduction of parchment gave a blow to bookbinding. The Romans, although they sometimes made up their manuscripts into "libri plicatiles"—that is, small tomes of the size of three or four inches square, preferred rolling their parchments round a wooden cylinder. Hence the word volume, from volvere, a word which is absurd in the way we apply it now.

Owing to the habit of using volumes, the art of binding books made little or no progress so long as the Romans ruled the world. And after their sceptre had been broken, Europe was too much occupied in fighting to think, during many centuries, of anything like science, art, or literature. A few monks, scattered here and there in remote convents, were the only people who wrote through all those troublous times, and it was not until the beginning of the eighth century that the clergy, having become powerful and respected, began to spread works of history, theology, and even of chivalry, throughout Europe. Books were, however, wofully costly at that period. The copying of a single volume in plain writing, without ornament of any kind, would of itself have required a labour of many months, but plain books would not have suited the taste of the ignorant nobles of that time. Being for the most part unable to read, what they looked for in a book was a collection of gorgeously illumined pages, and, above all, a sumptuous binding. So long as these were forthcoming, they would gladly have said of the rest that it was perfectly indifferent to them whether there were any writing or not; and it is thus that towards the time of Charlemagne (who himself, by the way, notwithstanding all his wisdom, could not read), the illumining and binding of books attained a degree of richness, which would surprise us even now. There exists in the Bibliothèque Impérial, at Paris, the prayer-book which Charlemagne gave to the city of Toulouse, and which that town presented to Napoleon I. when he stopped there on his way to Spain. It is marvellously illumined, the pages are of purple parchment lettered with gold, and the binding is of scarlet velvet, in a perfect state of preservation.

As chivalry and knightly tastes continued to spread, the love of handsome books increased, until at last the supply, unable to keep pace

with the demand, was quite inadequate to meet the requirements of the wealthy nobles. Monasteries were then the great storehouses of book-writing, copying, making, and binding. Certain monks, whose names have perished, spent all their lives over the illumining and binding of books; never leaving their cells except to pray, and never receiving a farthing for their labours, notwithstanding that their works were sold at a fabulous price for the benefit of greedy priors or rapacious bishops. When the crusades began, a few knights devoured by the thirst for tales of battle, learned to read; and fair ladies, finding the time long whilst their lords were away, did the same. By the end of the thirteenth century there were between fifteen hundred and two thousand monks in England alone, whose sole occupation was making books; and paper having been invented about that time, the publication of religious works was commenced under a cheaper form for the benefit of the middle classes, who were then very much better taught than the aristocracy.

The mania for splendid books of chivalry reached its climax under the reigns of Edward the Third and his immediate successors, when Froissart sojourned at the English court in company with Chaucer, the father of English poetry. One might almost be taxed with exaggeration were one to attempt to describe the treasures of art and wealth that were freely lavished upon the binding and illumining of a book in those days. A few prices will barely convey an idea of this bibliomaniac extravagance.

A copy of the Roman de la Rose, by Guillaume de Lorris, given by the Duke of Hereford (afterwards Henry the Fourth) to Mary Bohun, his wife, cost four hundred crowns of gold, something equivalent to seven hundred pounds of our money. The Prayer-book given in 1412 by Charles the Sixth of France to the Duchess of Burgundy, cost six hundred crowns of gold, and the Viscounty of Bayeux was specially taxed to pay for it. In 1430, at the coronation of Henry the Sixth of England as King of France, at Notre Dame, the regent Bedford was presented with three works of chivalry, and the young monarch with five, by a deputation of the citizens of Paris. The eight volumes together were valued at two thousand four hundred crowns; and it may be instructive to add that his Grace of Bedford, being subsequently in need of cash, disposed of them all for about a third of that sum. A scroll of music, purchased in 1441 for the abbey church of St. Stephen's, at Caen, necessitated an outlay of twenty-two sols (or silver pence), "the value of ten bushels of wheat."

And, as a final instance, the Bishop of Poictiers, Simon de Gramand, having presented a Latin and French dictionary, in two volumes, in the year 1426, to the Jacobine monastery of the town, it was resolved, in a council of the order, "that as a token of kindness for so munificent a gift prayers should be recited for him daily 'ad perpetuitatem,' and that after his death, masses for the sanctification of his soul should be offered up on the first Sunday of each month, in the chapel of the convent."

One might be tempted to suppose that, under the circumstances, the bookseller's bill, which even in these times plays a very conspicuous part in a schoolboy's expenses, must have been the terror and despair of mediæval parents. But such was not the case.

To begin with, boys went much later to school than they do now. Twelve was the usual age for commencing lessons, and as soon as a student had learnt to write, he was taught to make his own books. A Greek or Latin work was chained to a lectern in the middle of the schoolroom, the master gave out the passage that was to be learned by heart or construed, and the pupils came up turn by turn, or three or four at a time, and copied it out on their paper. It was only very wealthy scholars who could afford to have a complete set of books of their own, and the first head-master of Eton (the school was founded in 1441) had probably little more than six or eight volumes in his library.

We come now to the invention of printing, which marks a complete revolution in the social history of the world. It is well known that Fust, who established the first presses invented by Gutenberg, kept the discovery for some years secret, and gained an immense deal of money by selling the earliest printed books as manuscripts. When, however, the secret at last transpired, the price of printed volumes rose instead of falling, and for a long while the works printed at Nuremberg and Mayence fetched enormous sums. With the invention of printing, on the other hand, the fashion for costly bindings and illumined pages disappeared almost entirely. People began to care more for the inside than the outside of books. A few monks continued to adorn missals and bibles for kings or princes; but the art of binding may be said to have fallen into a complete state of stagnation for the next hundred years.

It was not until the middle of the sixteenth century, at the period known as the "Revival," that printed books having become more common, and consequently cheaper, the taste for handsome bindings set in once more. The richest library in Europe during the fifteenth century had been undoubtedly that formed at Buda by Mathias Corvin, King of Hungary. It numbered fifty thousand volumes (the greater part of which are now in the public library at Munich), and the bindings alone must have cost the worth of several hundred thousands of pounds of our money. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, private persons, noblemen, and wealthy merchants began to surpass monarchs in the splendour of their libraries. The most esteemed bookbinders of Europe had originally been Italians. Under the revival the palm passed to France, and the encouragement given to artists by the House of Valois produced such masters as Enguerraud, Boyer, Deuenille, Pas-

deloup, Derôme, Chameau, and others, whose marvellous bindings in ivory, gold, or figured leather, held a place beside the master-works of Benvenuto Cellini, Raphael, Michael Angelo, and Bernard Palissy.

England produced nothing very remarkable in the way of book-binding during either the sixteenth, seventeenth, or eighteenth centuries. Both under the reign of Louis the Fourteenth and under that of Louis the Fifteenth the French continued to hold the first place; and Boyet, Ponchartrain, Simier, Purgold, Vaugelles, and Bauzerian, all binders of the last century, were universally held to be incomparable. But already the spread of literature, under the influence of the great philosophical school, had prepared the decline and fall of the bookbinder's art. The more men read, the less can they afford to pay for their books. During the eighteenth century the English and French saw great authors succeed each other in such rapid succession, that it was all the public could do to keep step with them. To print quickly and cheaply became the aim and object of booksellers. No matter what the binding looked like, so long as the matter in it was good. Gradually the bookshelves of libraries became stocked with plain unseemly volumes, all bound uniformly in brown calfskin. A handsome volume came to be a rarity, and when the nineteenth century dawned it would have been difficult to find anything like a thoroughly beautiful book in any librarian's shop in Europe. We all remember those deplorable folios and those unpresentable quartos out of which our grandfathers read. Could anything be less worthy of the noble authors they covered than those dingy bindings, which reminded one of untanned shoe leather? And when, some fifty years ago, the fashion became prevalent of giving prize books to deserving youths, could anything have been more pitiful than the tawdry volumes with which they were afflicted for their merits?

For, of late years, notwithstanding the rabid demand for cheap editions, badly printed upon worthless paper, and ignobly bound, bookbinding has become an art again. The magnificent books published daily by certain great London houses are superior in point of printing, and equal in point of binding, to anything that the middle ages ever produced. And it may be looked upon as a set-off to our national inferiority in this respect during preceding centuries to know that, now-a-days, books bound and printed in England are held to be better than any published on the Continent. It is true that at the International Exhibition of 1867 it was a Toulouse firm that carried off the prize for printing and binding; but we must not forget that, in the first place, the majority of the jury were Frenchmen, and that in the second, the winners were awarded the prize for altogether exceptional editions, known as "editions de luxe," made entirely with a view to the prize, and never intended to be offered permanently for sale at the advertised prices. The English houses, on the contrary, exhibited none but true competition works, saleable to the public at the specified charges, and not at all "got up" for the occasion. As a general rule French printing is slovenly and French binding careless. And with regard to the illustration of books, Paris has nothing to show us that can in any way be compared with our London works illustrated by John Gilbert, Birket Foster, and others of equal fame. We make an exception in the case of Gustave Doré's works however.

A word now in conclusion. It is not so unimportant as certain people may think, whether a good book should be poorly or sumptuously bound. If we admit the refining and ennobling tendencies of art upon the human mind, we must allow that art should as much as possible have a hand in everything; that it should be asked to aid in all the handicraft of man; and that all our works, whatever they be, should more or less bear its impress. All that strikes the eye as being fair, imaginative, and of harmonious proportions, is good; good because it causes a pleasing impression on the senses, and good because it gives evidence of careful painstaking work: that is, of industry and diligence, the best proofs of civilisation. By all means, then, let us have good bindings to good books, and let us encourage those who would give them us. Gorgeous volumes are not within the means of every one; but we can most of us select good editions of moderate price in preference to bad ones. And those amongst us who are rich can, by well-timed and sensible liberality, make it worth the while of intelligent publishers to sell us handsome books, well printed, well illustrated, and well bound.

COMPANY MANNERS.

Almost all of us know what it is to have best things. In dress, furniture, rooms, and personal belongings generally, there are almost always an upper and an under crust, and a division into two classes—one for show, and the other for use. But it is not merely our persons and our rooms that we put into company dress for high days and holidays; we put our minds, our tempers, and our manners as well. Only the most marvellously amiable people have no company tempers at all, but are as sweet and placid on work-a-days as on Sundays; and only the very highest state of artificial good breeding, combined with this natural perfection of temper, makes us uniformly courteous to every one, irrespective of station or of degrees of intimacy.

Nothing is more rare than this unvarying good breeding; for just as fine ladies wear their court plumes only on court days, and as queens lay aside their crowns and go about in caps and bonnets like ordinary folk, so the gala dress of minds and manners, which is adopted for society, is dropped for the slipshod undress of home; and the people who have just now been

the very pink of politeness in a neighbour's drawing-room, become nothing better than boors at the family fireside, where there is no one to dazzle or to win.

The perfection of manner alone, even if it go no deeper than the outside, is a charm beyond that of mere beauty. The one is the result of education—that is, intellectual and spiritual; the other is only the raw material—a natural gift, not won but bestowed, and, though attracting personal love, reflecting no honour. What we mean by a thorough gentleman or a high-bred lady is one who has no veneer of company manners, but whose whole nature is so penetrated with the self-respect of courtesy, that nothing coarser can be shown under any provocation. This is an immense power in those who possess it. Nothing weakens a righteous cause so much as intemperate language in supporting it; and nothing tells more against a good principle than bad manners in those who uphold it. When men swear and fume, and use hard names, and make themselves generally disagreeable and insulting, it does not signify to the aggrieved in what cause or in whose service they are so comporting themselves. Human nature is but a weak vessel for holding justice at the best, and we may be sure that the natural inclination of most people would be against the cause advocated by such unpleasant adherents.

Speaking broadly, and from the widest standpoint of national characteristics, we would say that the Italians, of all European nations, have most of this solid courtesy throughout; not a stately, but a good-tempered courtesy—by no means chivalrous in the way of the stronger protecting the weaker, and for self-respect keeping watch and ward over the fiercer enemies within the soul, but rather deferential, as assuming that every one is better than themselves. When an Italian does give way to passion he is dangerous; but when in a good fair-sailing humour nothing can well exceed the almost feminine sweetness of his courteous demeanour. The French have a coarser core, that comes through the veneer on occasions when you touch their self-love or their jealousy; and the core of French discourtesy is very coarse indeed when really got at. We English have not a very fine veneer at any time, and the rougher grain below even that not over-polished surface rubs up without much trouble. But then we pride ourselves on this rough grain of ours, and think it a mark of honesty to let it ruffle up at the lightest touch. Indeed, we despise anything else, and have hard names for a courtesy that is even what the Americans call "clear grit" throughout; while as for that which is only veneer, stout or slender, there is no word of contempt too harsh for the expression of our opinion thereanent.

We are so far right, in that company manners put on for show and not integral to the character, nor worn in daily life, are an abomination to souls understanding the beauty of truth. But we need not be so frightfully severe against all kinds of surface smoothness as we are, and condemn the polish of material and the seeming of veneer as sins identical with each other. In this confusion of cases we are wholly wrong and unjustifiable; the one being a virtue attained only as an ultimate grace and by immense labour—the fruitage of a long and well cultivated garden; the other being just so much poonah-painting, or potichomania, or wax-fruit show—got at with no trouble at all—pretence and pretentiousness, and nothing more.

What can be more detestable than the things we see and hear at times from gentlefolks, whose gentlehood is in name, and appearance, and style of living, and the banker's book, rather than in anything more substantial? Take the woman who rates her children and flouts her husband when they are alone, but who is all smiles and suavity to the people next door, whom she despises—the girls, who are snappish and peevish to each other, but who put on their sweetest graces for the benefit of young Corydon and his sisters, diligently ironing down those rugged seams of theirs while turning the smooth side outermost, that young Corydon may think the stuff all of a piece throughout, with no jagged joinings anywhere—papa, who comes home "as cross as the cats," as the Irish say, letting the home life go shabby and slipshod for want of a little of the courtesy he bestows so lavishly on his guests, not a man of whom he likes, nor a woman of whom he fancies—"the boys," who make their sisters feel the full weight of masculine insolence and neglect, while to their sisters' friends they are everything that is chivalrous and devoted, as "boys" should be—can anything be less of the substance of gentlehood than these? And yet how often we meet with them in the world! Each of these represents a distinct section of the coarse core veneered—just so much plausible hypocrisy covering up an inner sin, as a silken coat hides ragged linen—just so much domestic misery that might be avoided if folks cared more for reality than for show, and thought the solid pudding of happiness better worth having than the frothed cream of praise. The fiddle is hung up behind the house door in too many homes, and suavity is laid aside with the dress suit. And yet it would seem by the merest common-sense calculation, that as home is the place where we live and where nine-tenths of our days are passed, home happiness and family peace are far in advance of any outside pleasures or barren social reputation, and should be the possessions we ought most to cultivate. But common-sense calculations have very little to do with the arrangement of our affairs. We lay aside our company manners with our company coats, and make ourselves what we call "comfortable" at home; that is, we give way to any natural peevishness of temper we may have, and suffer ourselves to go slipshod and unpleasant, both in mind and

body, for the benefit of those who are nearest and dearest to us.

The cause of this lies in the kind of home we of the middle classes make for ourselves; in the excessive exclusiveness and isolation which we think the only safe or decent mode of life; in the belief each man has that the four walls of his titular castle are built of better brick than any other man's four walls, and enclose pearls of price that would be spoilt if allowed to be set beside other pearls of as great price. No check of public opinion reaches the home circle of the middle classes, save on those rare holiday occasions which call forth company manners. Even a "lodger," though becoming by time part of the family, necessitates a little self-control, wanting in the ordinary conditions of a home life; for no one likes to show the worst of himself, or herself, to a person not connected with him, or her, by blood or marriage. To people who can take up their hats and umbrellas and walk out of the house at their own sweet wills we are considerate and courteous. We lavish on strangers and we starve our own.

There is no greater education into vulgarity than home carelessness. A man or woman brought up under such a system is ruined for all the reality of refinement in after years. The surliness too often allowed at home, where children are permitted to be snappish to each other, disobliging and discourteous, ruins the manners as much as it hurts the mind. Hence we come to company manners, to a sickly sweetness put on simply for the occasion, to a formality of speech and an oppressiveness of attentions, to an exaggerated politeness that is so terribly afraid of transgressing into liberties as to be absolute bondage, and to all the silly little affectations belonging to the condition.

We never know any one whom we have not lived with, and even then not always. To be admitted into the Temple does not include entrance into the adytum; and we may remain for weeks in a house where master and mistress and maids are all reticent alike, and may know nothing of the reality underlying the surface. People of whom I once knew something, and who were notoriously ill-matched but marvellously polite, could keep their house full of company, and yet allow none of their guests to find out that the husband and wife were not on speaking terms. All the communication between them, that was absolutely necessary, was carried on by writing. Personally, these two, dispensing smiles and civilities to all around, held no direct intercourse. Yet they managed so well that no one saw through the screen.

With company manners and company dress, there is also a company voice. Who does not know that false voice of society? Mincing or thrown boldly forward, flung into the chest or pitched up into the head, it is all the same—the company voice, accent, choice of words, and register—all artificial alike. And there are company gestures. People sit and stand and walk, and use their hands according to the different degrees of familiarity in which they stand towards their society. There is a vast deal of company make-believe among us; and if we would only give half the time we now bestow on "looking pretty" and "behaving pretty" in society, to being sweet tempered, and amiable, and careful of pleasing, at home, it would be all the better for ourselves and our families, and a gain in the way of true civilisation.

OLD NEWSPAPERS.

In the year 1679, some truth-loving persons set up a certain news-sheet entitled Mercurius Domesticus, published to prevent false reports; and for some time it was in high favour, as it published many strange and startling facts for the pleasure of contradicting them. This, however, was only one of many Mercuries—the first English newspaper having borne the name of Mercury. It was dated 1588, and a copy still exists in the British Museum. It is from these old Gazettes and Mercuries that we cull at random a few advertisements. There are many inquiries after run-away slaves: as "Lost, near Stocks Market, a negro boy called Kent, aged ten. His hair cut short round the crown of his head, with silver rings in his ears, and a russet cloth coat edged with blue, and cap of the same, belonging to Mr. Julius Deeds. Whoever shall bring the same shall have a guinea reward." The date is 1691. We often meet with advertisements conveying the information that at certain particular times and places a post will be established for the purpose of carrying letters; for instance, "These are to give notice, that, during his majestie's being at Windsor, there will go a post thither every evening from the General Post-office in Lombard-street, July, 1678." Travellers, to whom speed is an object, are informed that "A flying waggon from Bath to London in three days begins on April 7, 1729, and sets out from the market-place in Bath, and comes to the White Swan, Holborn Bridge, on Wednesday, and returns every Thursday to the said Unicorn in Bath. Passengers to pay ten shillings each, and a penny a pound for their goods. Performed by me, if God permit, Nicholas Peare."

What will the tea drinkers of the present day think of the following scrap of useful information: "That excellent, and by all physitians approved, China drink, called by the Cheneans tcha, and by other nations tay or tee, is sold at the Sultaness Head, by the Royal Exchange, London." This appears in a number of the Commonwealth Mercury for 1658, which also contains a doleful account of the death of "His most renowned Highness Oliver Lord Protector," and of the installation of his son, with the proclamation and the account of the rapture of the people, who did eagerly cry, "God save his Highness Richard Lord Protector!" In the same number we find the following characteristic announcement: "There is newly published A few Sighs from Hell; a

good warning to sinners, old and young, by that poor servant of the Lord, John Bunyan." Of the same author we also read: "Mr. John Bunyan, author of the Pilgrim's Progress, and many other excellent books that have found great acceptance, hath left behind him several MSS. His widow is desired to print them; they will make a book of ten shillings. All persons who desire so great and good a work will send in five shillings for their own payment to Dorman Newman. 1690." Of another person, whose name is famous in literature, we hear, "The gentleman who was so severely ridiculed for bad horsemanship as Johnny Gilpin, died at Bath leaving twenty thousand pounds. 1790." In May, 1763, we read: "The creditors of the late William Shenstone, Esq., of the Seasowes, are desired to send an account of their debts and accounts in order to have them discharged." In 1751 we read: "The house and gardens of Edward Gibbon, Esq., at Putney, to be let for any number of years."

In December, 1680, a wonderful bargain is advertised thus: "These are to give notice to persons of quality, that a small parcel of most excellent tea is by accident fallen into the hands of a private person to be sold; but that all may not be disappointed, the lowest price is thirty shillings a pound, and not any to be sold under a pound weight, for which they are desired to bring a convenient box."

There is a curious notice "to all gentlemen and others of the surname of Abraham, who are desired to meet at the Pump, in Wallbrook, on Wednesday, there they will meet others of the same name who are desirous of forming a pleasant club. 1705."

Even matrimonial advertisements sometimes find their way into these old papers. Thus: "To Gentlemen of Fortune.—A most advantageous opportunity now offers to any young gentlemen of quality and independent fortune. The advertiser now offers to introduce such to an accomplished young lady of fortune and greater expectancy. None but a real gentleman will succeed. 1771."

Here is another: "A middle-sized, genteel gentleman, supposed to be of the age of twenty-five or thereabouts, of a handsome, cheerful countenance, a widish mouth with very fine teeth, looked like a clergyman, and was chiefly in company with a very young officer at Ranelagh on Friday. If the said gentleman is really of the Church of England, and is a single man, and has no objection to an agreeable companion for life, of a pious and virtuous disposition, not much turned of thirty, and who is in possession of a very handsome jointure, by directing a line to M. A., at Jack's Coffee House, may hear of further particulars. 1759."

In a copy of the Times for October, 1798, we find some interesting paragraphs. The news of the day were Nelson's glorious victory and the Irish rebellion; and the two small sheets are principally filled up with these important subjects. We read, that "immediately that the news of the gallant victory obtained by Admiral Nelson was known at Lloyd's, a subscription was opened for the relief of the widows and orphans of the brave who died there for their country's glory." Another paragraph tells us: "Among the wonders of the present day, Mrs. Siddons' late achievements at Bath, Brighton, and London should not be forgotten. She positively performed at each of these places within the incredibly short space of ninety-six hours." The coarse paper, bad type, and small size of this paper would ill please the Times readers of the present day.

It is even more interesting to read the longer paragraphs, and, comparing them with the leaders and well-written articles in some of our modern newspapers, to note the march of intellect. We have reason to be thankful that we live, not in days when our ideas of the outer world, as derived from newspapers, were confused by accounts of "mowing devils," "possessed maidens," "three suns," "headless men," and "double children," but in times when special correspondents from all parts of the world supply us with word pictures and eloquent histories of great events.

THE ABBOT'S POOL.

IN SIX CHAPTERS. CHAPTER III.

Why any secret? I love not secrets.

THE honeymoon was over, the ordeal of wedding visits gone through, and the doctor and his wife settled down into home life. Philip Denbigh had well said that Elsie was the only woman in the world for him; and every hour of close wedded union deepened his passionate affection for her. His nature, reserved and intense in everything, was one which peculiarly needed to repose on "the soft pillow of a woman's mind;" and though not by any means his equal in intellect, she very soon learned to enter into many of the subjects that interested him, and to like them for their own sake as well as for his. And yet, while every hour gave her fresh proofs of his devotion to her, while she saw that his fond looks followed her whenever they were in company together, and that her soft voice was always heard by him in ever so large a party, Elsie had arrived, within the first year of their marriage, at the conclusion that, for some reason beyond her ken, her husband was not happy, and, moreover, that he did not fully trust her. He was unaccountably anxious to study the address of every letter she received, and he had a habit of cross-examining her minutely, and with a restless eagerness which he tried in vain to conceal, as to whom she had seen and what she had done during his absence; it often happened that he would recur to the subject long after she had finished her simple history, turning on her with sudden sharp questioning, as if he suspected her of trying to conceal or falsify something. More than once some chance inaccuracy in her statement had worked him up into just such an un-

reasonable storm as she had seen on the day when she found the ring; but he was always so sorry afterwards, and so grieved to have grieved her, that she learned to dread these scenes far more on his account than for the passing pain they caused herself.

At first she always considered that she was to blame when he fell into these strange fits of temper; but she was soon half vexed, half comforted, to find that his captious and suspicious ways were discussed with lively interest in the kitchen.

"I don't know what ever have a come to 'un. It's enough to drive a body maze-mad," old Isott declared, with free spoken wrath. "He 've as good as told I a score o' times this year as I were a trying for to deceive 'un. I tell 'un I never did tell lies when I were young, and 'taint likely as I'd begin now as I'll so soon have to gie an account. Master baint half the gentleman as he used to be, and I don't care who hears me say so."

But in spite of these growls, Isott vigorously snubbed her underlings if they ventured to make any remarks to the same effect in her presence.

One hot August afternoon, when the earth seemed to lie baking and panting under the fierce heat of the sun, Mr. Denbigh was walking, with rapid strides, across the field at the back of his house. It was a short cut from some parts of the village, but of late he had seldom used it. On this occasion he crossed the grass almost at a run, vaulted over the low gate which led into the garden, and was soon at the drawing-room window. The outside blinds were down, and the room looked cool and pleasant in their green shade; the perfume of jasmine and roses and lemon-scented verbena, breathed from the flower vases; and Elsie, in her white summer dress, was seated at the open window. She began an exclamation at her husband's worn fagged looks, but he interrupted her:

"I can't stop. I only came to tell you that I was right in what I feared this morning. Those Bailey children have scarlet fever, undoubtedly, in its worst form. That poor little boy is dead already, and the four others are down. Fools that they are! Never calling one in till it is too late."

"Oh, how sorry I am!"

"Yes, I don't see what chance any of them have in that close nest of cottages; it must spread like wildfire. And it has been for a week in the workhouse wards at Slowcombe."

"Will that give you more work?"

"Of course; I have sent for help from Brixham, but, till it comes, I must do all the work, so don't wait dinner for me."

"But can't you come in and take a mutton chop? No? Well, some cold meat? A glass of wine, at least?" said Elsie, diminishing her offers as he shook his head at every suggestion.

"I shall do very well; only, love, don't expect me till you see me, and, above all, don't sit up."

"But can I do nothing to help these poor people? Do they want nothing?"

"Nothing? Everything! Go to Mrs. Carter, dearest, and see what woman's wit can devise to help the sick, and, above all, to feed up and care for those who are still well; prevention is better than cure. Only, whatever happens, I won't have you run into the slightest danger, mind that."

Then followed two months, during which Mrs. Denbigh scarcely saw her husband, though she heard of him from many people, and never without praise and blessing. It was a sharp conflict that he waged with the plague fiend, and he brought to the service all the power of science and skill assisted by the thoroughness which was his great characteristic. Though he seemed to have more on his hands than any human being could accomplish, no one was neglected, no blunders were made, nobody could complain of forgetfulness, or undue hurry on the doctor's part, and many were dragged back from the very brink of the grave. He really seemed to live without eating or sleeping; and, even when assistance came from elsewhere, he only entered his own house for a hurried meal, a cold bath, an hour's sleep, and, above all, the word and kiss to his wife, which, as he truly told her, were more to him than sleep.

With the freshening days of October, the fever abated, the fresh cases became fewer every day, and many of the sick began to recover. The vicar's wife, who had been managing a dispensary, while Mrs. Denbigh had undertaken certain arrangements for feeding some of those yet unstricken, reported that they had better join forces, most of the convalescents having reached a stage to require kitchen physic. And at last there came an evening when Mr. Denbigh entered his house as it was growing dusk, and announced to his delighted wife, that, unless specially summoned, he should not go out again that night.

"Never mind about dinner, Elsie," he said; "if you have dined, tea will be much more to the purpose." And he passed on to his dressing-room. When he entered the sitting-room again, it was glowing with the brightness of fire and candle; the chintz curtains were drawn to exclude the dreary wet daylight; the armchair was drawn temptingly near the fire; and the choice white tea-service, which Elsie only used on rare occasions, sent out its fragrance from its own particular little table. Elsie herself knelt on the hearth, the firelight glancing on her shining hair and the few bright ornaments on her dark dress, as she coaxed the kettle into boiling. It was a picture of home comfort, and Philip Denbigh seemed for once to give himself up entirely to the enjoyment of the moment, as he sank back into the depths of his armchair to his well-earned repose.

"Thank you," he roused himself to say, as his wife arranged a tempting little meal at his elbow on another small table; "I ought to be waiting on you, my love, not you on me; but somehow I am strangely tired."

"No wonder; but you are only tired, not ill, are you?" she asked, with sudden alarm. "O, Philip, how hot your head is!"

She noticed, too, that he only played with the food which Isott had carefully prepared, and at length he owned that it was of no use to try to eat it.

"But don't look so scared, Elsie," he said, smiling. "My hour has not struck yet."

"I can't get out of the trick of feeling anxious," she returned; "though it is very faithless of me, when you have so many prayers to guard you. If you could hear, Philip, how these poor mothers speak of you! They are so grateful!"

"Grateful? God help them, poor wretches! they've little enough to be grateful to me for," said Mr. Denbigh, heavily. "How many of them find life so pleasant, do you think, that they need be very overpowering in their thankfulness?"

"Most of them; nearly all, I am sure. The poorest of them have something to love, and, therefore, something to live for. Surely, Philip, you and I, of all people, should never talk as if life were not worth having."

"May be so; but for my part, with every case I brought round, I wondered if the child—they were most of them children, you know—wouldn't live to curse me for not letting it die."

"Oh! Of a child one may sometimes feel that, but it is a faithless feeling still, is it not? God, who has allowed you to save them, has surely done so for some good wise purpose, and for their own happiness."

"It is all a lottery," said Mr. Denbigh, gloomily; "the circumstances make the saint or the sinner. Do you suppose that Cain or Judas, or any others whose names are a by-word for all that is bad, were really one whit worse than dozens and hundreds of respectable folks, who have lived respected, and had all the shops shut on their funeral day? Not they. It all depends on the amount of temptation that is thrown in a man's way, whether he stands or falls."

"But surely," said Elsie, rather bewildered, "it is not as if we were at the mercy of chance; surely God sends all our trials according to what He knows to be best for us?"

"Yes, that is the correct theory, I know, and certainly a comfortable one, doing away with any semblance of human responsibility. If omnipotence and omniscience arrange all the scenes of the play, well and good. Man is only a puppet in their hands; let them look to it."

He spoke bitterly and incoherently, and Elsie was silent a moment, shocked at his expressions.

"I do not know you to-night, Philip," she then said, looking anxiously in his face; "you are tired out. Won't you go to bed? Think how long it is since you have had a night's unbroken rest. You will take a more hopeful view of life and of your fellow-creatures, to-morrow, I am sure."

"It is longer still since I have heard you sing," he answered. "Have not you a book of solemn old chants somewhere? I am not in tune for anything else to-night."

She searched among her music, and presently her sweet low voice began to chant the Dies Iræ, with a mournful pathetic expression, which peculiarly suited the grand old melody and the touching words, in which faith and hope are struggling with something akin to despair. Her husband leaned his head on his hand, as he listened intently to the passionate pleading of every solemn verse.

> Seeking me Thy worn feet hasted,
> On the cross Thy soul death tasted;
> Let not all those toils be wasted!

sang Elsie, and, as the last notes died away, he rose abruptly, saying,

"I am tired out, Elsie, and my head aches. I will go to bed."

His wife soon followed him, but before midnight she was at Isott's door with a frightened summons. He had awakened from a short sleep to find the pain in his head violently increased, and was in a state of so much fever, that Mrs. Denbigh was dreadfully frightened. He was quite conscious, however, and would not hear of her sending for Mr. Scott; indeed she had not confidence enough in Mr. Scott's skill to care to press the matter; and she was presently comforted by Isott's pronouncing that he was merely over-tired, and recommending that universal panacea, a cup of tea. It did him good, for he fell into a sleep. It was so uneasy a one, however, that Mrs. Denbigh would not risk disturbing him by lying down again herself, but joined the old servant, who sat keeping watch over the teapot by the fire in the dressing-room.

"He seems to be dreaming very miserably, and he is so feverish," she whispered. "Do you really think it is not going to be anything bad?"

"Lor bless ye, no," said Isott, reassuringly; "he be just a downright tired out, that's what he be. To my mind, he han't been really like hisself this ever so long."

"I have sometimes thought that too," said Elsie, too frightened not to speak plainly to this tried old friend of her husband's. "I have fancied him out of spirits, oh! this long time." And she glanced through the open door at the bed where he lay, his countenance looking most careworn and haggard in his uneasy sleep.

"My dear," said Isott, in a mysterious whisper, "he do love ye better 'n anything as ever he've a got; whatever be a troubling of him, it baint nothing as you've got a call to be jealous of; you be sure of that."

"Oh, surely yes," Elsie said, smiling at the preposterous idea that she could be jealous.

"Well, then," the old woman went on, "supposin' he've a got some secret as he do keep from ye, it baint nothing of that sort, and may be, if he'd take courage, and up and tell ye, he'd be a deal easier once 'twas over."

Mrs. Denbigh felt and looked surprised, but did not know what to say, and Isott went on rapidly: "I be a foolish old 'oman like enough, but sure I am he han't never been the same since that there strange gentleman came here the night afore you and he was married. What! he never told ye, eh?" she added, quickly, seeing her mistress's bewildered looks.

"I do not think he ever did," said Mrs. Denbigh, collecting all her soft dignity, "so, Isott, don't you tell me either, for I should not like to hear it at all, unless I hear it from him."

"Lor' bless ye, Mrs. Denbigh, I han't a got nothing to tell ye. 'Twas only as I were up late, over in my cottage there, ironing out Jonathan's shirt, and I see'd a light in the surgery parlour, and I looked across and see'd he and a strange man a standing between the light and the window talking. There, my dear, that be all I do assure ye."

"Well, that is not much certainly. What makes you tell me of it? I don't understand."

"Strangers be scarce in Sedgbrook," said Isott, bluntly "and strangers like that too, with a lot of nasty hair stuff all about his mouth, and chin, and the hair o' his head Lord knows how long, and his face all one as the colour of that there brown table-cover. Not as I saw much of 'un, 'twere master as I did look at, and as sure as you're alive, my dear, he'd brought him some bad news or other; for master'd got a look on his face as I never seed there afore—though many and many's the time I've seen it there since."

Mrs. Denbigh felt uncomfortable. Still she felt that to discuss Philip's affairs with a servant, even so old and tried a servant as Isott, was not seemly, and, rather reproaching herself for having listened so far, she began,

"Well, Isott, when Mr. Denbigh is well, I will ask him about it, you may be sure."

"Do ye, my dear, do ye," said Isott, interrupting her eagerly. "Now that be the very reason why I've a telled ye all this. Suppose master have a got into debts with this here new furnishing, or suppose there be any trouble as he've a got into afore he was a courting of you. Lord bless ye, young men will be young men! Why, it's only natural as he shouldn't like to tell ye, and nothing 'll ever put it out of my mind as that there queer, furrin looking chap were either a bullying him for money, or trying for to break off his marriage wi' you, or sum'at o' that. So now, my dear, do ye try and make 'un tell ye about it; for 'tis a nasty tiresome feel for a man to have sum'at as he's bound to keep from his missus. Hark! He be a waking."

He had indeed awakened with a great start, and Elsie, going softly to his side, found him sitting up in bed, and could hear him repeating under his breath, very rapidly, the words: "Fear not them that kill the body—that kill the body—but fear Him that can cast both body and soul into hell."

She was overpowered with horror and alarm; but, in another moment, he came to himself, and said in his natural voice, as he sank back on the pillow: "Elsie, how come you to be up at this hour?"

"You have not been well," she answered, keeping her voice steady by an effort; but, dimly as the night light was burning, her white looks did not escape his notice, and the next question was in the sharp anxious voice which she knew so well.

"What have I been saying to make you look like that?"

"Nothing, dearest. I think some texts from the Bible were running in your head, nothing more."

"Nothing more, really?" He held her hand tightly across his burning forehead, while he seemed to collect his thoughts. "Elsie," he resumed, in a calmer tone, "listen to me. I believe this headache and feverishness are nothing but the effect of work and worry; still, it may be the fever. If it should be, you must make me one promise. Let Isott nurse me, and let no one else enter the room, and don't come near me yourself. Promise!"

"I cannot, indeed. How can you ask me?" she cried, much hurt. "Would not you despise any wife who could make or keep such a promise?"

"Promise!" he repeated. "Elsie, you are driving me into a fever; you are driving me mad by refusing; you don't know what you do. Promise!"

With a firm conviction that he was already delirious, she gave the required promise, trusting that she was not very wicked in doing so, without meaning to keep it.

"But I hope you will be better to-morrow," she said, as cheerfully as she could. "Isott thinks you are only knocked up by all you have lately done."

"It is my own belief," he said, and still holding her hand clasped in his, he soon fell into another sleep: a less uneasy one this time, though still he moaned and muttered. And at every startled waking, came the question:

"What have I been saying?"

Towards morning he grew quieter, and Elsie noticed, thankfully, that his forehead and hands were cooler, and his face more like itself. She stole to the window, and stepped behind the curtain to look at the dawn, which was beginning to break; and as she leaned her head against the glass, her thoughts were busy with Isott's suggestion. It comforted her to think that some old debt or boyish scrape was at the bottom of her husband's strange words and ways. That, she thought, would account for everything. His uneven spirits, his suspicious temper, his jealous dread of what she might hear or see, would all be quite natural if he were keeping some secret from her. Her eyes filled with happy hopeful tears, as she pictured herself winning from him his full confidence, and giving him in return the heart-felt assurance, that no extravagance, or folly, or boyish error could in the least diminish her love, or lessen her respect, for him.

"When he is well," she thought, "I will ask

him what he has on his mind, and if he will but tell me, all will be well."

So mused Elsie Denbigh, while her husband within the room tossed and muttered in his feverish sleep; and without the room, the reddening sky was reflected in the black waters of the Abbot's Pool.

CHAPTER IV.

Dear my Lord,
Make me acquainted with your cause of grief.
SHAKESPEARE.

MR. DENBIGH's illness proved not to be serious. A few days of entire rest conquered it. Elsie had by no means forgotten the resolution which had grown out of her talk with Isott, but it was not easy to find an opportunity of carrying it into effect. Again and again she began little remarks intended to lead up to the great question: "Have you anything on your mind?" And again and again she had not courage to come to the point.

One evening, as they sat together, he suddenly asked her if she had ever read Southey's All for Love, and insisted on reading it through to her. When he had finished he asked her what she thought of it?

"It is very beautiful," she said; "only I don't feel as if it were natural."

"What! You think the devil no longer goeth about, seeking whom he may devour?"

"I did not mean that. I meant that I do not think Cyra's married life could have been so happy and peaceful with that dreadful man for her husband."

"Indeed? Not when

He loved her as sincerely,
Most wretched and unhappy man,
As he had bought her dearly.

Did not that deserve some little return, however bad he might be?"

"I did not say she could not love him. But the more she cared for him, the more she would feel the gulf between them, I think. Oh! it is a wretched heart-breaking story; how glad I am it never really happened."

"Yes; that is a comfort certainly," he said; and there was a pause, which she broke by saying,

"If there had been nothing else to make the heroine of this poem unhappy, she must have seen that there was an atmosphere about her husband which she could not understand; a something hidden from her. Can anything be more wretched than that?"

She stopped, and, finding herself on the brink of her great subject, blushed so guiltily that her husband asked, in his sudden suspicious way:

"What are you thinking about?"

She left her place, and came to kneel beside him. She put her arms round his neck, and laid her head on his breast, bending down so that he could not see her face. "I am thinking," she said, with a fast-beating heart, "that I should be so grieved if you ever kept anything from me, anything that was perplexing you, or troubling you! Whatever it was, I would so much rather know it, and help you to bear it."

She ended her little speech, rather surprised that he had not interrupted her; he did not even answer or move until she looked up, afraid that she had vexed him. But there was no anger in his face; there was only a grave and troubled look; and all he said was: "What fancies have you got in your head, Elsie?"

"I have thought sometimes, when I have seen you look oppressed and out of spirits, that something—I have no idea what, Philip—was worrying you, and making you anxious; perhaps something that you don't like to tell me; and I have so often longed to beg you to trust me, and let me know if there is anything. I could bear it, Philip, indeed, indeed I could bear anything, if I only felt that you did really trust me."

He took her in his arms, and held her clasped in them, smoothing down her long fair hair.

"Poor child! poor child!" he said, and then there was a deep heavy sigh, as if it came from a whole world of oppression.

"Philip," she pleaded, returning to the charge, "if you have anything that worries you, do tell me. Whatever it is, I shall not mind."

"Not mind? That's a rash promise, Elsie. What if I were to tell you that I have sold myself to the demon, like Eleëmon, for your sake?"

Rather hurt at being put off with jests like a silly girl, Mrs. Denbigh collected all her dignity and said: "You must not laugh at me, Philip. It was your old nurse who first began to be in a fidget about you. She infected me, I think. She has a fancy that you heard some bad news, or were vexed somehow, the night before we were married. Philip, where are you going? What is it?"

"The surgery bell," he answered, already at the door.

He was absent for some moments. Presently he came back.

"No ring. A mistake," he said. "Go on, Elsie. I am curious. I was not aware that Isott took so much interest in my proceedings. What did I hear or do on our wedding day?"

"The night before; but really it is nothing—only I had better tell you, that you may stop old Isott from gossiping;" and she told him all that the old woman had said, and her fancy that he might be suppressing some anxiety or trouble out of consideration for his wife.

"And you know, Philip, I never could bear that," she concluded; "anything but that, I should not care for."

"What would you say to me, Elsie, if I had loved you better than God and Heaven and my own soul?"

She looked up, half frightened. He watched her wistful face for a moment, then broke into a laugh.

"What a pity so much excitement should be thrown away! Did it never occur to you,

or to old Isott, my darling, that medical men sometimes get telegraphic messages at unwonted hours, and that they may look care-worn and speak sourly when they are worried out of their wits, without having some deadly secret on hand?"

"Telegraphic messages!" repeated Elsie, slowly, as if pondering over the idea; "was that really it? It was a telegraph office clerk, then, I suppose? You must think me a goose, Philip, for wondering who it could have been."

He smiled at her folly, then, crossing the room to a desk where he kept his private papers, brought her one of those pencil-written documents at which most of our hearts have sometimes beat high. It was a telegram from Briswick, relating to the state of a former patient, and bearing date the day before their marriage.

Elsie hung her head. He could not bear the sight of her ashamed look, and he stooped and kissed her forehead.

"I will speak to old Isott to-morrow," he said; "these confounded old women who have nursed one and washed one, as a baby, can never be brought to understand that one is old enough to be let alone."

"And you are not angry with me?"

"Angry with you? Oh! my poor child," he said, sitting down again with a heavy sigh, "I hoped I should have made you happy, and it seems I have only made you troubled, and anxious, and wretched. It would have been better for you if you'd never seen me."

"You must be angry with me, or you would not speak so," she answered. "You know I think myself the happiest woman in the world."

"At all events, you are my wife," he said, abruptly; "you have taken me for better for worse, my poor little thing, and you must 'dree your weird,' whatever comes. So sit down here, Elsie, and let me rest my head on your shoulder while I can, for I am very weary to-night, my love. Oh, Elsie, I am very, very weary."

In a few days he had quite recovered his strength, and plunged afresh into his many labours.

So the seasons came and went; winter succeeded to summer, and summer returned; and the peaceful stream of village life flowed on with little to break or trouble its course. In a very short time, as it seemed to Elsie Denbigh, the first anniversary of her marriage passed, and then the second passed, and now Christmas was over, and the third was at hand. Mr. Denbigh had prospered in all things; his reputation spread and his work increased, and his income grew, and he was cited in all the neighbourhood as the very picture of a deservedly successful man. His sweet wife was as much as ever the idol of his adoration, and during the last few months had been doubly the object of his tenderest care; for the crowning blessing, without which the happiest marriage must be incomplete, was now about to be granted to them. She was all delight and thankfulness; but it somewhat troubled her that she could not quite arrive at a full perception of her husband's feelings on the matter. He smiled at her happiness, and was never tired of watching her joyous little matronly preparations; but, nevertheless, she saw—and wondered as she saw—that though he looked forward to the possession of their new treasure with intense interest, it was an interest largely mixed with trouble.

On a January morning she stood waiting for her husband to come down to breakfast: stood, idly watching the frost-bound garden and the whitened field, and the long icicles which hung from the boughs of the trees, and were reflected in the Abbot's Pool.

She turned, as he entered, rubbing his hands, and exclaiming against the cold. One of the first acts of his married life had been to set up a post-bag for his letters; and he had endured with perfect indifference the many remarks which this proceeding had brought upon him. The bag now lay on the table, and he proceeded to open it with the key which never left his watch-chain.

"This is vexatious," he said, after glancing through the one letter it contained. "Here am I summoned to London, to appear to-morrow before the committee about that Briswick workhouse case. I must start to-day."

"That is tiresome; and to-morrow evening Mrs. Carter was to bring her children and her little nieces to drink tea here. You will miss them. What a pity."

"That I shall survive, I dare say; only don't you tire yourself, love, whatever you do. I shall try hard to get home the day after to-morrow."

"Indeed, I hope so. Why, the day after to-morrow is our wedding day!"

A search into the mysteries of Bradshaw made it evident that the doctor must leave Slowcombe by the train which started at one o'clock. As the coach passed through Sedgbrook at twelve, he said he would avail himself of it, and not risk his horse on the icy roads.

"And I will come and see you off," said his wife, pausing, as she moved away to her hurried preparations. He demurred, but gave way at the sight of her imploring face, saying:

"Well, well, I can't refuse you. But Jonathan shall follow in the pony trap, and drive you home. I won't have you sliding about these frosty lanes without my arm to lean upon."

Isott often remembered in after days how she watched them from the door; the strong husband accommodating his brisk step to the slow pace of his delicate wife, who clung to him more out of love for the strong supporting arm than because its stay was necessary to her. Others there were also, who told long afterwards how the pair walked together in close conversation up the village street; how he looked back after her from his seat, as long as the coach was in sight; and how mournfully she turned away.

The little party to which she had alluded was

on a very small scale, being merely an entertainment to the four vicarage children and two little cousins who were staying with them. The vicar and his wife were the only grown-up guests; but Mrs. Denbigh's life was such a quiet one, that she looked on the occasion as something of an event, and was anxious that her house should wear its prettiest aspect. She spent all that dull winter afternoon in renewing the Christmas holly which dressed the room, and tired herself thoroughly.

The hour fixed for her little party was, of course, an early one. By six o'clock in the evening the substantial tea was over, and they went to the drawing-room, where the children were to amuse themselves with games. "Magic music" was the first, and the children's interest was greatly heightened by Mrs. Denbigh announcing that the child who found the thing hidden, should keep it. A very animated scene followed, the little ones searching high and low, under tables, and behind curtains, as the music, now loud, now low, encouraged them to proceed or warned them that they were on a false scent. And when fat little Johnny Carter, a sturdy four years' old boy, the youngest of the vicarage children, discovered that the prize was buried in the white Astrachan hearth-rug, what a merry shout there was, and how delighted the little hero looked, as he undid the roll of paper in which it was enveloped, and brought out a quaint old Father Christmas, whose head unscrewed, and showed all his venerable body stuffed with sugar-plums!

"How very pretty Mrs. Denbigh is looking to-night," Mrs. Carter whispered to her husband; "one never grows used to her beauty; it strikes one afresh constantly, does not it?"

"Remarkably well she looks; that black velvet suits her exactly, and she is wonderfully brightened up to-night."

She was indeed in unusual beauty; her fair skin and blue eyes set off to peculiar advantage by her dress, which, with its square cut bodice and hanging sleeves, had the quaint effect of an old picture. She wore a set of heavy old-fashioned silver ornaments, and her sweet face looked its sweetest.

"You must not tire yourself," said Mrs. Carter, smiling at her, as she again took her place at the piano.

"Oh, this does not tire me," she said. "It is so nice to see the children happy? I wish Philip were here."

"Do you?" thought Mrs. Carter, "I can't agree with you. I wonder why I dislike that man so.——When do you expect him?" she asked aloud.

"Perhaps to-morrow."

"There is Isott making telegraphic signals at the door," said Mrs. Carter; "I think she wants you."

Mrs. Denbigh went to the door, and the old servant drew her into the hall; her shrewd honest face wearing a look of perplexity, as she said:

"Here be a man a come as wants to see master; and if master bain't at home, he wants to see the missus—so he says. What be I to do?"

"What sort of man is he?"

"Why, a queer sort of chap, ma'am, like to a furriner; only he bain't a furriner neither, I don't think; sum'at in the seafaring line he might be, unless he be a tramp all the time and after the spoons; but I've a showed 'im into that there surgery parlour, and 'a won't get much out o' that, unless 'tis pills and draughts."

"Did you tell him," asked Elsie, "that Mr. Denbigh will be at home to-morrow, or the day after, at latest?"

"Yes, I did; and he says you'll do every bit as well as master. He's sorry to ill-convenience you, so he says, but he 'ont keep you not one minute."

"Just stay in the vestibule while I go in, Isott," said her mistress. "Is there a light? Yes? Then I'll come directly." And having explained her absence to Mrs. Carter, and asked her to take her place at the piano for a few moments, Mrs. Denbigh crossed the vestibule and went into the surgery parlour.

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HESTER'S HISTORY.

A NEW SERIAL TALE.

CHAPTER XXVII. HESTER, THE SPY.

THE landing on which they emerged was in flames; also the staircase on before them. For those who had been ignorant of the planning of the castle there had been no hope. Sir Archie knew where to look for the small door which led to the narrow stair made of stone, which wound down, and down, all through the building, to the servants' quarters at the back of the castle. On the stone stair they were safe, and in a few moments they were breathing freely in open air. That back door, through which Miss Madge's rebel had rushed one evening, was unfastened. Through this they passed out into a thick lonely grove near the small old-fashioned entrance. Then the ancient drawbridge was straight before them.

"My mother!" said Sir Archie. "I must return and look for her!"

"She's safe, sir—the family's all safe," said Pat, at his elbow. "It's you they're afther. It's yourself ye have to save! Cross the bridge, and get into the moat."

"You must not wait for me," said Hester. "I will run to the village, to Mrs. Hazeldean."

"I will not leave you till I leave you with her," said Sir Archie. "We will go on together."

Discussion could only waste time. Hester's fears put wings to her feet. The glare from the burning castle was all over the sky. They could hear the horrible roar of the flames, and the shouts of the soldiery. Showers of sparks fell about them as they crept along in the hollow of the moat, sheltered under the high bank, with its fringes of ferns, and its drooping bushes.

They ventured on the road at last. By-and-by they heard a group of soldiers coming noisily along, and hid behind some bushes in the hedge. One of the soldiers swore he had seen something moving in the ditch, and poked among the bushes with his bayonet. The bayonet grazed Hester's arm, as it stuck in the soft moss and earth by her side. Happily this soldier's companions believed he had been mistaken, and insisted on dragging him on. They were in haste to reach the scene of action.

After this little adventure Sir Archie kept clear of the road. It was safer, though slower, ploughing through the heather, with knolls and rocks for shelter at right and left. At some places he had to carry Hester, being deaf to her entreaties that he would go on without her. A grey lightness began to glimmer upon the air. "Oh God, keep it dark till we reach the bay!" prayed Hester. But the night was on the wane. The clouds quivered and parted, leaned together a while, then loosened their hold, and fell back to north and to south, to east and west, leaving the sky a sea of pallid green, with faint stars struggling and expiring in its depths.

The curve of the bay was reached at last, but a little distance from the village. The boat was still waiting, with the faithful boatman; who proved to be Madge's rebel, Polly's lover.

"I will not go," said Sir Archie, "till I leave you safe with Mrs. Hazeldean."

"Step into the boat!" cried Hester, almost maddened by the thought of the delay and its risk. "Do not lose an instant. When you are gone I shall be cautious, and take care of myself; but if you come a step further with me, I will throw myself on the first bayonet I meet."

Sir Archie looked at her in amazement, the meek Hester quivering and glowing with passion.

"I cannot leave you to go by yourself," he said.

Hester was in despair: but a happy thought struck her, and changing her manner, she began to complain bitterly.

"Oh, why will you insist on destroying me?" she said, wringing her hands. "Do you not know that I am only in danger so long as I am in your company? When you are gone I shall be safe."

"She's right, yer honer," said the boatman. "Ye'll only be the ruin o' her."

Sir Archie, with a shock, seemed to see truth in this argument.

"I have been mad," he said, "not to think of that." And he sprang into the boat. "Fly, in God's name, then!" he cried, as he saw her standing alone and defenceless on the shore.

"I shall be quite safe!" cried Hester, radiant, as she saw the boat move off. "Nothing can hurt me now."

Sir Archie, from the bay, saw her flying figure disappear among the houses of the village.

Then he looked up his glen, and saw torrents of smoke and flame pouring and streaming above the trees, above the hills, into the pale green air of the dawn. He thanked God that those he loved were safe, and wondered bitterly about the helpless crowd that had taken refuge under his roof. But the boat sped farther and farther out to sea. A rival conflagration to that ghastly one of the hills burst forth among the clouds in the east. The sun rose, and Sir Archie was out of danger.

Meantime Hester sped on through the village. Not a living creature was to be seen. Heaps of ruins smoked on every side, and some of the larger houses still burned fiercely. Hester's heart died within her, as she thought that Mrs. Hazeldean's house might also lie in ashes. The doctor and his wife might be dead, buried under the ruins of their home. Why not, when fire was everywhere? The very air seemed blazing, as the red light of the rising sun strengthened and came streaming from the east, glowing upon Hester's shoulders, falling before her on the road. Heaven and earth were burning. It seemed to her that she was flying through a wilderness of flames.

At such a time as this people think all of themselves, or nothing of themselves. At the first news of the attack upon the castle, Dr. Hazeldean had gone out from his house and taken his way up the glen. This husband and his wife had taken counsel together, and they had agreed that it was his duty to go and see to the wounded. So the doctor went forth, and Mrs. Hazeldean remained in her house.

She was on her knees in her parlour, alone, when she heard Hester's wild hands coming beating on her door and window. Her lamp was still burning, and her shutters closed. She had passed the long hours of the night in prayer, and she did not know that the morning had already arisen. The noise aroused her rudely. She arose from her knees, and went boldly to her door. She expected less gentle visitors than the worn-out fugitive who clamoured for admittance. Why should she think to be spared in such an hour? The brave ruddy sunlight poured in on her from the outer world, and Hester fell sobbing into her arms.

"He is saved!" cried Hester; "he is saved!"

"Who is saved?" asked Mrs. Hazeldean.

"Sir Archie," said Hester. "He is half across the bay by this time!"

She was a sorry figure for Mrs. Hazeldean's kind eyes to behold. Her face was blackened, her arm bled from the wound made by the bayonet, her clothes were scorched, her hands burned.

Happily it is not necessary to state here how many young babes and their mothers perished with the destruction of the Castle of Glenluce. In the morning which followed that woful night, it was found that a heap of ruins was all that remained of the home of the Munros. Then came the rebels mustering, blanching, and raving, and cursing deeply over the murdered wives and mothers, the old men who were no more, and the maidens whom yesterday morning had beheld in their bloom. They had doubted Sir Archie, and held aloof from him. Now that he had suffered, that he had perished, as was supposed, in the flames with their kin, they held him a martyr to their cause, and vowed vengeance on his destroyers. None could tell that Sir Archie had been saved, except the Hazeldeans, Hester, and Pat, the butler. And none of these chose to speak. It was well he should be thought to have perished, so long as there could be danger of his being pursued. For to be suspected in these times was to be held guilty, to be hunted with relentless fury unto death.

So it was believed that Sir Archie had died among his people, his poor whom he had striven so hard to save. Lady Helen Munro and Miss Golden had been rescued by Pierce Humphrey, and escorted to Shane's Castle, where Lord O'Neal lay dying. Miss Madge was also of this melancholy party.

When last we saw Miss Madge she was at work making bullets. Later she betook herself on a sad mission among the crowds of doomed fugitives. In the end she was dragged out of the flames in despite of her own recklessness, torn from an upper room, where she was scorching to death, throwing children out of the windows, with appeals to some soldiers not so fiendish as the rest. Poor Madge had been no beauty at any time of her life, in spite of her declaration made to Hester, that she had grown up well and astonished everybody. But she bore the scars of that night upon her face, till it was hid from public view in her coffin.

Soon it got abroad among the rebels that it was Hester Cashel, the spy, who had wrought all this mischief; who had burned the castle with Sir Archie and his people.

Towards evening on the day after the attack on Glenluce a crowd of rebels assembled on Dr. Hazeldean's lawn. The doctor was again abroad upon his errand of mercy. Mrs. Hazeldean went out and parleyed with the ominous intruders. They were mad with untamed grief, savage with the thirst for vengeance.

"The spy!" they demanded. "The spy! We want the spy!"

"What spy?" asked Mrs. Hazeldean. "We have no spy here."

"The spy Hester!" they cried. "The cursed English spy who burned our women, and our children, and our master."

"You are terribly mistaken," said Mrs. Hazeldean. "She is not a spy. She had nothing to do with these horrors that have happened, beyond suffering in the midst of them, which she has done bravely."

"Bring her out!" they shouted, "or we will burn the house over her head!"

"I will not bring her out," said Mrs. Hazeldean, gazing unflinchingly on the terrible band. She stood bareheaded and defenceless amongst them, in the sunshine of the bright June day. One of the men raised his pike at her with a

menace, but was instantly struck down by his leader.

"Learn manners, you coward!" cried the leader, and then turned to Mrs. Hazeldean.

"Madam," he said, "we do not wish to hurt you; but you must give up Hester Cashel, or we burn down your house."

"I will not give her up," said Mrs. Hazeldean, and turned, and walked towards her door.

The rebels marched after her, and pressed into her hall. Then Hester, who was up-stairs, heard them.

She was lying upon a bed in pain, having had leisure to suffer from her wounds. She sprang up, listened, and remembered Pat's warning. She understood the state of the case. She dressed in all haste. Her scorched gown was gone, and she seized a white wrapper of Mrs. Hazeldean's, which was hanging somewhere at hand in the room. She thrust her hands through her tangled golden hair, sweeping it from her face. She hastened down the stairs.

A group of the rebels were in the parlour with Mrs. Hazeldean; she striving to pacify them; they chafing and threatening. When Hester appeared a thrill went through all present, for she looked like one risen from the dead. Her face was ghostly; in its ghastly whiteness, and awful look of fear. With the unconscious gesture of pain, she stretched her burned hands piteously before her. But that thrill passed away, and the rage burst forth.

"Curses on her picture face!" cried one.

"A thousand deaths would be too little for her!" cried another.

"Let me die a thousand deaths in one, then," said Hester; "but do not hurt her," pointing to Mrs. Hazeldean.

The leader of the rebels looked at her with attention. Perhaps he had suffered less than the rest; perhaps for a moment he had doubts as to her guilt. He could feel admiration for her courage and her beauty; and pity for her youth. For a moment. Then the maddening recollection of last night's hideous deed returned.

"Why did you burn our women and children?" cried he, gnashing his teeth, and stamping.

"I did not burn them," said Hester. "I did what I could to save them."

"She lies, with her pale face!" cried some of the rebels. "Seize her, and have done with this!"

Two men laid hold of Hester's arms. She got dizzy, but strove hard to keep her senses and be firm. "I saved him," she thought, "and now I will save her."

"Do not kill me here," she said to one of the men. "Take me a good way off. It would frighten her."

She moved away with her captors, a step; but Mrs. Hazeldean threw herself on her knees before the door.

"Glensmen!" she cried, "for many long years I have loved you and worked amongst you. All the sympathy of my heart, all the help that was in my power, of my hands and of my purse, I have given you. If ever I have nursed your children, sat by your sick-beds, prayed with your dying, and streaked out your dead, I call on you, in the name of the God who will one day judge me and judge you, to spare me that innocent girl! If not, you shall drag her hence over my corpse."

The men's countenances changed as they remembered her merciful deeds. Tears of anguish trickled down scowling faces, as other scenes arose before them, conjured up by her sudden impassioned words. And many of the fiercest hung their heads.

The leader looked suddenly up, and scanned them all. He glanced from his band to the two women, from the two women back to his band. Perhaps that suspicion of Hester's innocence grew suddenly within him to a conviction—perhaps Mrs. Hazeldean's words had a special force for him.

"After that, boys," he said, "we can do no more."

He caught Hester, gently enough, round the waist, lifted her in a twinkling, and laid her on a sofa at the other end of the room.

"It shall never be said," he went on, "that Glensmen shed the blood of their friend! Shall it, boys?"

"No," was answered sullenly, with groans.

"Back, then, boys—back! Rise, madam," to Mrs. Hazeldean, "and don't be afraid. We are not ungrateful. We bind ourselves from this moment to protect your sacred house. Do we swear, boys? Raise your pikes, and swear!"

The pikes were raised amidst a gloomy murmur of obedience. And the terrible visitors went their way.

CHAPTER XXVIII. HOW EVERYTHING ENDED HAPPILY.

All nightmares pass away. The morning dawns, and the terrible trouble is gone. Every one knows how the rebellion raged in Ireland in the year ninety-eight, but I will not say another word of its horrors in this tale. Glenluce had suffered the worst that could happen to it, and so was left in peace. The doctor's house remained unharmed, and the doctor and his wife pursued their mission of mercy among such of the poor people as survived, who came creeping by-and-by out of their hiding places in the mountains, wandering back to look on the ruins of their homes, to weep on their blackened hearths, and call on Heaven to put an end to their sufferings. A temporary asylum was erected for the houseless, and nurse and physician were at hand.

By this time the North had become quiet, though war still raged in other parts of the country, and it was not certain what the issue might be. A heavy lonesome gloom overhung the glens, that had been so happy, and so homely. Some of the people were re-established in new homes, and some were assisted to emigrate. And it was formally made known that the estates of Sir Archie Munro, who had de-

servedly suffered punishment as a rebel, had been legally made over to Judith, Lady Humphrey, as a reward for her exertions in bringing treason to light.

Dr. Hazeldean urged his wife to leave the melancholy country, but so long as there was help to be given she would not quit her home. She looked upon herself as bound—by the mercy the rebels had shown her—to show mercy in return to their kin. Most of the men who had granted her prayer on that memorable day had died a death of torture. She would shield and succour the few they had left behind.

Besides, these good Samaritans had taken Hester under their care. After that terrible scene, when she had been rescued from the rebels, she had fallen into a fever. Her life had been hardly saved by Dr. Hazeldean. Thus had she been twice snatched from death by these friends.

It was not the old Hester who rose from her sick bed. She walked feebly into the glowing August sunshine, and looked upon the ruin she had made. She wondered why she had lived, and hoped to die before long. She was looked on as the spy, whose life had been hardly bought by Mrs. Hazeldean's exertions. She did not even know whether Sir Archie had been saved after all. No message had come from him, no news had been heard of his fate. His fishing-boat might not have carried him to an opposite shore. Inquiry were dangerous. It was well, just at present, that the world should think him dead. So there was nothing for those who waited, but patience and suspense.

Poor Hester little knew that she was yet to be a happy woman. Just at this stage of her life she had to battle through a period that was worse than any death. Fire and sword were always before her eyes. In her fever she had raved of them a hundred times a day, and in the nights offering her life to the soldiers, to the rebels, in exchange for the life of Sir Archie, or that of her watchful and tender nurse, Mrs. Hazeldean.

When able to move about, she would sit musing over all that happened, recalling every word which she had written to Lady Humphrey, wondering at her own blindness and simplicity. She accounted herself the murderess of all those people who had perished in the castle.

"I did not do it willingly," she said; "but *I did it.*"

When able to walk far enough, she would toil up the glen, and examine the blackened walls of the castle.

"There is the wall of the tower," she would say, "where I used to write my letters to Lady Humphrey. Yonder black hole was the window from which we fired our guns."

She would shrink behind Mrs. Hazeldean, when any of the country people met them on the road. She knew how they regarded her. The poorest creature would have shuddered at her touch.

"I ought to be put to death," she said once. "For taking one life people are made to give up their own. But I have taken the lives of near a hundred people."

This was a morbid frame of mind no doubt; but she had to live it through. All Mrs. Hazeldean's loving comfort and gentle preaching could not wear away this horror that kept preying on her mind.

"She will never know peace so long as she remains in this place," said the doctor. "We must take her away."

In the mean time letters reached them, letters written by Lady Helen, from London, where she was reposing after her terrible experiences, and rather enjoying, in a lugubrious way, her position as a heroine among wondering and sympathising friends.

"You know, dear Margaret," she wrote, "I always felt it my duty to look at your eccentric conduct from a charitable point of view. I have often passed over things when, as a sister, I might have advised you to think more of your own dignity. But I must say, that I never shall feel obliged to forgive you, if it be true what people say, that you are harbouring that hateful Hester in your house. The treacherous creature who has caused the ruin of your family! Of course when they wanted to cut her to pieces before your eyes, it was natural you should interfere. Such an occurrence happening in one's parlour would be highly objectionable. But she ought at once have been handed over to the law, like all other people who have been guilty of great crimes. For of course it is ridiculous to say that poor dear Archie was a rebel, though I am sure I always told him he was, and foresaw from the first what would be the end of it. They say that her employer, Judith Humphrey, has got possession of the estates, so doubtless the young wretch, Hester, will receive a handsome dowry as her reward for her services. She will not need to work any longer at her needle. And ah, dear me! how sweetly she could make a dress! I call it a melancholy thing to see such a genius led astray. As for the estates, I intend to go to law about them, as soon as I am strong enough. In the mean time it does not much signify, as there is no one left to pay rent, and the country must be quite a waste. I'm sure I wonder how you can bear to live in it.

"Apropos of Lady Humphrey, I have another shocking piece of news to communicate. Janet Golden, that girl whom I have treated as a daughter, has had the cruelty and audacity to marry the woman's son. Not but what the young man behaved well in saving us from the fire; though I must say he gave my arm a terrible twist when I was struggling very naturally in hysterics, and he insisted on dragging me quite roughly from the room. I never can get over the feeling that he knew all about his mother's wicked plot, though Janet and he both declare he did not. It seems it is quite an old affair between them, and our poor dear Archie—it afflicts me even to mention his name—was only a cat's paw made use of by Miss Janet during a quarrel. I cannot understand it, I

must own. The world must be coming to an end, *I* say. The conduct of people now-a-days is to be accounted for in no other manner. When you and I were girls, young women did not burn down castles, nor marry the deadly enemies of the friends who had cherished them.

It is not necessary to give Mrs. Hazeldean's reply to this letter. It did not silence Lady Helen, who committed pages of her sentiments to the tender mercies of the post; but it would be tedious to quote further from her ladyship's correspondence.

Side by side with those of Lady Helen came other letters from the Mother Augustine.

"Let nothing," wrote she, "let no mistaken counsel induce you to believe evil of our poor simple Hester. I must tell you that I have got Cousin Madge as a patient under my care. She arrived in London sadly burned and shaken about, and I advised her to come here into hospital, where I might be able to attend to her myself. She was very glad to come, and she already gets quite better. She has given me all particulars of the strange sad events at Glenluce. She makes Hester a real heroine, and it is utterly impossible that the poor child could be guilty of the crime that is imputed to her. Lady Humphrey makes no secret of her share in the transaction. She has accomplished her work and she has received her wages. Let us hope that she will yet have the honesty to clear poor Hester's name. Her son, who seems a good-hearted young man, came to see me the other day with his bride. He deplored his mother's conduct, and entreated me to believe that he had no share in, that he was completely in ignorance of, her plans. He swore that he would never own the estates of Glenluce. He had quarrelled sadly with his mother on the subject. She is an unhappy old woman, after all. The bride of this young man, little Janet of old times, joined her husband in assuring me of the innocence of Hester. Janet spoke very prettily of the girl's goodness and courage, and acknowledged, with regret, having annoyed poor Hester, on occasions, with her humours.

"And now I have reserved for the last a joyful secret, which I am almost afraid to commit to paper. Our dear Archie is alive and well. I dare not say more. Come quickly to London and bring Hester."

Very joyfully was that journey to London performed. The mother received the travellers in her pleasant parlour, the room into which Hester had been ushered on that memorable morning after the masquerade ball. There were with her Miss Madge and Sir Archie. Of course each of this party had his own story to tell. But, after all the miseries had been disposed of, there was exceeding joy in the old convent of St. Mark.

Five years passed away before the next important events of this story took place. These years had made Hester a bright healthy woman. Only one thing was wanting to make her thoroughly happy, and this, when it was offered her, she had put aside. She had twice refused to be Sir Archie's wife.

"I do not pretend," she said, "that I could not love you well, if it might be; but it never can, so long as your mother and the world believe that I entered your house as a spy—that I brought ruin on your family."

Nothing would induce her to go back to Glenluce. Before the doctor and his wife returned to their home, they left Hester in France, established as teacher of English in a quiet convent school.

So the five years passed away. In the mean time Lady Humphrey had gone to Ireland, to take possession of her Irish estates; but she had been obliged to return very quickly whence she came. No one at Glenluce would touch her money; no one at Glenluce would till her ground. It was with difficulty she could procure for herself even the necessaries of life. She was hissed and threatened wherever she went. Her English attendants fled in terror from the place, and very soon she was constrained to do likewise.

So her ill-gotten possessions were not sweet to her ladyship. She returned to Hampton Court a wretched old woman. She had bitterly alienated her son. The wife she had coveted for him was his, with her wealth; but husband and wife were as strangers to her now. She quietly settled down to sickness and despair. Old age came on her quickly. If ever she had a heart, it was certainly broken.

On her death-bed she cried out for people to come to her.

"They cannot be so cruel," she said, "as to let me die, with all this load upon my soul!"

Her son came to her then, and brought his wife. And then they wrote for Hester, whom Janet received kindly in her luxurious London home. These young women had not met since they sat together one night in a darkening tower room with an enemy at the gates, and a bridal dress between them. But they did not choose to talk of that time just at first.

Hester was more changed than was Janet. Mrs. Pierce was quite as wilful as ever—quite as pretty also, though much more amiable and happy. But Hester had grown taller, and was much plumper than she used to be. Her timid girlish shyness had passed away; so also had the morbidness and melancholy. She was a sweet loveable woman, with a bright winning "way" about her; with intellect and feeling in her tender lovely face.

It was a strange thing to Hester to come again to Hampton Court; to see once more the well-known rooms which had been the centre of her fairyland. It was stranger still the standing by Lady Humphrey's dying bed.

She had been sent for, to stand there, while a tardy act of justice was accomplished and written down. In the presence of Pierce and the presence of Janet; of Lady Helen Munro, who had with difficulty been brought to the

spot as the most necessary of the witnesses; of Mrs. Hazeldean, who had come from Glenluce; and of Sir Archie, who was no longer forbid to show his face in England. And never fear but our Honourable Madge was of the group.

Lady Humphrey gave up her claim to the estates of Glenluce, and returned them with compunction to Sir Archie. And Lady Humphrey declared Hester to have been innocent of all knowledge of any private plans of hers, whether at the period of the girl's residence at Glenluce, before that period, or since.

"Send your daughter Mary to me," she said to Sir Archie, when her mind began to wander, and she took him for his father who was dead. "I saw her in a pretty parlour, with a black veil upon her head. She had a crucifix hanging by her side. Send her to talk to me. And hark ye! *tell her to bring the crucifix!*"

"You are worthy to be a Munro, my dear!" said the Honourable Madge to Hester on the eve of her wedding-day. "And I don't know that I could say anything more, unless I said 'You are worthy to be a M'Naughten.' An Honourable M'Naughten. And of course you never can be a M'Naughten now, so there is no use talking about that. But you are going to be a Munro, and Munros don't grow under every hedge, I can tell you."

Lady Helen was present at the marriage; an unhoped for piece of condescension. The only thing she deplored in the whole affair at the last, was the fact that propriety would not suffer Hester to make her own dress for the occasion.

"Such a finish as she would have given to it, my dear!" she said to Janet; to whom she had long been reconciled.

So Hester was married to Sir Archie, and they went bravely back to settle in their desolated glens. The village was soon restored to more than its former thriftiness. Cottages rose on the hill sides, and farmhouses in the valleys. Yellow thatches shone once more in the sun, and pigeons cooed again about the chimneys. A new castle was built, but its site was chosen far from the old one. The charred walls that recalled the dreadful past were cleared away, and the grass grows soft and green above its cellars and foundations. Only the ancient drawbridge and the moat remain to mark the spot where the former castle stood.

Lady Helen never returned to the glens. Her nerves had received a shock, she said, which would oblige her to live in London for the future. Not so Miss Madge, who consented with much joy to take up her abode with Hester.

Said Hester, speaking of the new castle to Mrs. Hazeldean:

"The best thing about it, in my mind, is, that it is nearer by half a mile, than the old one, to you."

Her arms were round Mrs. Hazeldean's neck. Sir Archie was standing by. It was the first day of their habitation of the new home of the Munros.

But Hester's grandson lives now in that castle, with his grandchildren.

THE END.

LEAVES FROM THE MAHOGANY TREE.

(CONCLUSION.)

PASTRY AND AN ENTREMET OF GREAT MERIT.

PUDDING à la citizen's wife; pudding à la Richelieu; Chancellor's pudding (this is a very pretty mess); pudding à la Reine; creams aux fraises and aux framboises; jellies, ever shaking their transparent sides at other people's jokes; ices, masses of frozen perfume and nectared sweetness; we salute you, one and all.

We feel as we begin to write that sort of gastronomic satisfaction with which Adam, if an epicure either in posse or esse, must have regarded the great procession of animals that defiled past him through Eden, on the first great christening day that ever was. There was the buffalo, rejoicing in his juicy hump, the cut-and-come-again of generations as yet unborn. There, too, small, yet alert, was the proud humble bee, conscious of the one sweet clear drop of honey in his little pouch, stored up by him for millions of delighted school boys. Blandly smiling came the turtle, beating his breast, like the marriage guest when he heard "the loud bassoon," in prophetic agony at the tortures his decendants were to suffer at the hands of greedy men. The pig, a mere good-natured bag with a nose, eyes, and the power of motion, strode by heedless of the part he would have to play, in many a revolving sausage machine. The ox bellowed defiance of Englishmen as yet invisible, while the savoury green bull-frog croaked protests against ante-natal Gaul with no knife and fork yet in him. The Michaelmas goose must have waddled by a mere superfluity on the earth, while the oyster floating on his back calmly past the contemplative and unconscious first man, must have turned on him the pale and sickly eye of thoughtful regret. It was to be centuries before the first painted savage of Colchester, according to the late Mr. Robert Brough, ate in solemn revenge the spiteful and hostile fish that had nipped his incautious finger, and, in so punishing his enemy, made one of the great discoveries that ever heaped blessings on humanity. It took man two thousand years, only think of that (shudder Pride, cower Ambition!) before man's imperfect brain discovered the never-to-be-forgotten SCOLLOP. Strengthened by that discovery, Science then made giant strides, and a Napoleon of cooking, about the year 14 B.C., struck out the great thought of diffusing oysters throughout the juicy crevices of beef-steak pies. On the principle of the illogical but kindly old lady who, when she was told of the introduction of gas into London for the purpose of street lighting, exclaimed sorrowfully, "What will become of the poor whales," so we pity the

oysters, those mute inglorious Hampdens, that century after century grew delicious, yet died neglected and unheeded by struggling man.

A great world of puddings, creams, pâtés, tartlets, and jellies lies before us, and we have to pick our way through it, stopping here and there to nibble and to browse. Shades of dead pâtissiers, spirits of extinct confiseurs, rise round us in savoury steams, and evoke for us the ghosts of past gastronomic pleasures; recal those stewed apricots at Memphis; those maids of honour at the pleasant dinner at the Star and Garter, when the red October sun was glowing over the foggy Thames, and the champagne was simmering up the little well shafts of our wine cups. Let us recal the iced meringues of the Palais Royal, the purple blooded damson tarts of our appreciative school days, the apricot tarts of our maturer years, the salads de fraises au marasquin of our still riper judgment.

The French, gayer and lighter handed at the confectioner's oven than ourselves, moulding pastry almost as well as we do steel and iron, have always been fond of the playthings of the kitchen; the tartlets, the custards, the frothy nothings that are fashioned out of the evanescent union of whipped cream and spun sugar. Their politeness, their brag, their accomplishments, their love of the external, all lead to such dainties, which the true epicure, who has well dined insists on somewhat contemptuously despising. It was observed when the allies were in France and carried off fifty million francs in tumbrils from the Rue Vivienne, and, what was worse, six hundred thousand bottles of the best champagne from poor M. Moet's cellars at Epernay, that the love of pastry in Paris derived a new development from the vexatious visit. Madame Felix, in the Passage des Panoramas, is said to have sold between twelve and fifteen thousand pâtés in a day. Tom Moore, always as steady a gourmet as he was a tuft hunter, used to visit the Passage after a déjeuner à la fourchette at the Café Hardy, where he describes sumptuously the coffee sealed up with

> A neat glass of Parfait amour, which one sips,
> Just as if bottled velvet tipp'd over one's lips.

The gay Irish Anacreon then proceeds to sketch Madame Felix in his pleasant butterfly way:

> If some who're Lotharios in feeding should wish
> Just to flirt with a luncheon (a devilish bad trick),
> As it takes off the bloom of one's appetite, Dick,
> To the Passage des—(what d'ye call it?)—des Panoramas
> We quicken our pace, and there heartily cram as
> Seducing young pâtés, as ever could cozen
> One out of one's appetite, down by the dozen.

At that strange wild time, when the flaunting painted beauties under the arcades of the Palais Royal, and the gamblers on the floors above, allured to that dangerous quarter Cossacks of the Don, whose bare skin, as Haydon observed, showed through the rents in their chain mail, bullying Prussian officers looking like truculent drill-sergeants, bright blonde moustachioed young Austrian officers, stalwart rather too contemptuous Englishmen, subtle Russians, half savage Circassians, and quite savage Bashkirs—this motley crowd of blue, white, and scarlet, plumed with feathers and epauletted with gold and silver lace, jingled, clashed, swore, threatened, clattered, sung, and cursed, all day in and out of the pastry shops of Paris, so that before the detested foreign bayonets defiled out of France, waggon-loads of tarts and cheesecakes must have disappeared before the ravening jaws of those strangely mingled soldiers. The visit of the Allies to Paris was, in fact, the apotheosis of pastry and the coronation time of the fricassée. That visit, resultless in many respects, bore at least this remarkable fruit, that it diffused a taste for French cooking, French pastry, and French wines throughout nearly the whole of civilised Europe.

Dreikopf very thoughtfully observes, that the wisest men that ever lived have been unable to decide on the comparative merits of pies and puddings. Mr. Hayward, who has carefully digested the subject, gives the palm to puddings, as affording more scope for the inventive genius of the cook, but thinks them too often underdone. Plum pudding requires care not to be raw, or as dangerously heavy as an eighteen-pound shot. Who that has travelled in the East (a journey in which expatriation at pleasant Christmas time is indispensable.) does not remember the agonising plum porridge that your chuckling dragoman served up with innocent triumph, saying "Here is de booding, what you want, eh, my gentlemens? ver good, eh? what say my gentlemens?" and that, too, after you had regaled on a thin, leathery, caught-up fowl and a joint of old goat, and were intending to make up by a pleasant reminiscence of home and younger days? Lord Byron, once spent a whole morning, in Italy, weighing out materials for a national pudding to celebrate his own birthday. He felt there was danger, he tried to guard against fate, but in vain. The result was a smoking tureen of raisin soup. Byron was much quizzed about this, and used to bear it with the childish petulance of a vain and wayward tempered man. Plum pudding is a dish of great antiquity, but it requires the digestion of warriors after a tournament to eat much of it with impunity. Let no member of the Temperance Society (the society is, we are told, dyspeptic to a man, and rather inclined to excess in solid food, nature repressed on one side always breaking out on the other) partake of plum pudding, for a chasse après is imperative, and the ordinary digestion, refused this comfort, always has a habit of revenging itself cruelly, nightmares trample on you all that night, and your soft feather-bed turns into a burning prairie, or to Damiens' couch of steel.

It is said that George the Third, methodical

in his dull but worthy way, used to insist on a cherry tart every day in the year; which reminds us of a quiet country gentleman we once knew, whose gardener had carried off enough gold medals to pave a greenhouse. The master did not care much for flowers, they were for his wife; his only request was that he might find a cucumber on the dinner-table, every day from January to December. The late Lord Dudley, whose brain at last softened, and who showed it first by calling on friends, mistaking their houses for his own, and wondering why in the name of all that was sacred the other man did not go, could not dine without apple *pie* (he hated the word *tart,* and applied it only to open pastry). Once when Foreign Secretary, Lord Dudley, dining with Prince Esterhazy, the Hungarian Crœsus, who used to strew Almack's with fallen diamonds (the London tradition says about three hundred pounds' worth every evening he attended), was put out at finding none of his favourite humble delicacy, and kept muttering in his absent way, "God bless my soul, no apple pie." This eccentric nobleman, whose peculiarities Theodore Hook introduced into one of his novels, used to talk aloud to himself about his friends present, and his state of brain was at last disclosed by his sending an important despatch to the wrong foreign court. The late Duke of Cambridge revelled in apple dumplings. On one occasion, on a visit to Belvoir Castle to attend the celebration of the noble owner's birthday, the royal visitor was shown a sumptuous and most exquisitely devised bill of fare, and was asked if he could suggest any improvements. "Yes," replied the simple-minded guest. "I don't see a roast pig, or an apple dumpling." It was the fourth of January, but the pigs of the neighbourhood were instantly called upon, and at last an infant pig was found, slain and cooked. A similar story is told at Epsom of our present gracious Majesty, who, when a sumptuous déjeuner was laid out for her at her first visit to the races, asked for a slice of bread and butter and a glass of water, the only delicacies not to be found in the royal marquee. Can we doubt that great people, fretful over the crumpled rose leaf, often long for the delicious physical fatigue of the tired farm labourer, and the healthy hunger of the receptive navigator?

It has been decided on great authority that a green apricot tart is a good thing, but that a green apricot pudding is far better. A cherry dumpling is better than a cherry tart. Both rhubarb and apple pies are improved by a slight infusion of lemon juice, while a bay leaf gives an exquisite aromatic flavour to a rice pudding.

There is a romance and history even about pastry; for instance, the Baba, a species of savoury biscuit coloured with saffron, was introduced into France by Stanislas the First, King of Poland, at a time when unfortunate Poland was alternately the scourge and the victim of Russia. The dish was perhaps Oriental in origin. It is made with brioche paste mixed with Madeira, currants, raisins, sugar, and potted cream. The Lord Chancellor's pudding, though unpleasant from the memories it awakens, is a good pudding, but not a *very* good pudding, as we once heard an eminent lawyer subtly define a pudding upon whose merits he was asked to pronounce judgment. Boil a pint of cream, in which is infused a little lemon peel and salt, pour it boiling over a pound of crushed biscuits, and let them soak. Then add the yolks of eight eggs, and the whites of six others. The pudding can also be made with savoury biscuits, or the crumbs of a penny loaf, but it is best with brown bread. When made, pour the mixture into a mould, and immerse it in a stew-pan of boiling water with fire placed over the lid. The sauce can be made with a spoonful of arrow-root, white wine, and some sugar rubbed on a lemon, and then boiled. It can also be made with rum, but mind there must always be lemon peel.

The pudding à la bourgeoise of the French is our bread-and-butter pudding, with a difference, and an excellent basis for further invention its appetising simplicity is. First fill your buttered mould with slices of bread and butter, spread with dried currants. Fill up with cold boiled milk, flavoured with lemon peel, a little sugar and suet, and six eggs. Boil for one hour, and serve with sweetened arrow-root sauce.

Jellies are rather monotonous in flavour, but their liquid jewel colour is always pleasant to the eye; they figure pleasantly on a supper table, but they are to sound food what puns and bon-mots are compared to wise thoughts and profound reflections. There is a place for them, however, even by the side of the roast pheasant and the pâté de Perigord, and they nestle down gracefully between the game pies and the cold fowls. An authority we can trust advises orange jelly to be twice poured through the bag, or it will be thick and opaque. It should never be passed through paper, as that filters off all the aroma, which is a stomachic. Mosaic jelly, made with orange and cream jelly, is very pretty to look at when the colours are kept clear and distinct. Madeira jelly is improved in summer by a mixture of strawberries. A Macédoine is a very delicious variety of dainty, and worthy of French taste, invention, and refinement. It is made with wine jelly frozen in a mould, with grapes, strawberries, greengages, and other fruits, fresh or preserved, frozen in alternate layers of fruit and jelly. In winter the Macédoine may be made with preserved peaches, plums, greengages, cherries, apricots, or pineapples, or more economically with slices of pears and apples boiled in syrup coloured with carmine, saffron, or cochineal, the flavour aided by angelica and brandied cherries. Many great judges have decided the jelly au miroton des pêches à la Ude to be the perfection of jellies. Get half a dozen peaches, peel them carefully, and boil them with their kernels for a short time in a fine syrup. After an hour you take the syrup, squeeze six lemons into it, pass it through a bag, add some clarified isinglass,

and put some of it into a mould in ice. Then fill up with the peaches and jelly alternately, and freeze it. Medlar jelly is also by no means contemptible.

The fruit cheeses are very pleasant rich conserves for dessert. They can be made with apricots, strawberries, raspberries, pineappple, peach, vanilla, or chocolate. The system of cheese-making is in all cases the same. The fruit is pounded with sugar, and rubbed through a tammy, then melted isinglass and thick cream are added, whipped over ice and put into the mould.

As for creams, you may flavour them with lemon, chocolate, vanilla, orange flower, tube rose, or what you will. You add the yolk of an egg for every cupful; but after all there is no flavour so exquisite and pastorally delicious as the plain old-fashioned custard, with the homely brown dust of nutmeg mantling on its rich yellow surface. If living near Richmond let the reader who values his friends, and plans a party, never forget "the maids of honour"—those exquisite mouthfuls said to have been invented to please the palate of that epicurean and rather dull and selfish sovereign, Queen Anne. It is pleasant, when eating them, to remember that Swift may have snapped them up in the intervals of his bitter sayings, that that terrible virago, Sarah, devoured them contemptuously, and that all the pretty and witty of Anne's court approved of them hugely, vastly

But we have grossly slighted our English puddings, and to close our series without expatiating on them would be to prove ourselves unworthy of the very name of Englishmen. Yet first a word of comment on Mrs. Rundell's economics of pudding cookery. Her golden rules may be codified without at all lessening their value. Take care the cloth the pudding is boiled in is clean, or it will taint the pudding. Eggs being now everywhere expensive, use, if you wish to be saving, snow (when you can get it; it don't always snow just when you want it), two spoonfuls of fresh table-beer, or one of yeast will do just as well. The cloth must be tied loose for bread puddings, tight for flour. Raisin wine is as good as sherry for puddings; always use salt. Half an hour for every half a pint is the standard time for boiling. The materials must always exactly fill the basin. A mealy potato grated while hot, and beaten up with milk, adds to the lightness of plum puddings.

We dwell upon these rules because they tend to economy, and that is a virtue usually in very small favour with those expensive and reckless men, the writers of cookery books. They revel in puddings made with macaroons and brandy, &c., the expense of which makes one shudder. Almond pudding, again, made with wine, eggs, grated lemon, butter, cream, and sugar, is a capital pudding; but too costly for family use. Far cheaper is marmalade pudding, made with Seville orange marmalade poured upon a rasped French roll, porcupined with blanched almonds, and eaten with whipped currant jelly. This is a very tidy pudding. Sago, rice, and all other seeds, should be soaked an hour before using, to remove the taste of earth or of the packing cloths. Bread-and-butter pudding is improved by sliced citron and a custard sauce, with eggs, pimento, and a trifling drop of ratafia; soak the slices before baking. A Welsh cook we once had used to spread jam over the bread and butter, to the great advantage of this pudding. The custardy flavour of the bread imbued with the flavour of strawberry or raspberry is highly pleasant to poor humanity.

What can we say that has not been already said of orange and lemon pudding, amber pudding, baked apple pudding, cranberry, Swiss, oatmeal, barley, Dutch rice, new college, cheese, brown bread, biscuit, batter, muffin, Duke of Cumberland's, Nelson, potato, carrot, and chestnut? Among the old-fashioned, simple-hearted old puddings, formerly common even in London eating-houses, cowslip and tansy were the most characteristic. Both have little claim to be remembered, except on the plea that Shakespeare, no doubt, partook of them. In both cases the tansy and cowslip have about as much to do with the puddings as the flint stone has with the proverbial broth. The pounded tansies are mixed with eggs and cream, spinach juice, Naples biscuits, sugar, white wine, and nutmegs. The mixture is thickened over the fire, then put into a dish lined with paste and baked. It does not sound well, we must confess, and nevertheless it was a current pudding—we mean a popular pudding, twenty years ago. In the other and more venial case you cut and crush a peck of innocent cowslips with Naples biscuits and three pints of cream. When boiled, you add sixteen eggs, a little cold water, and half a cup of milk and sugar. You bake and serve up sugared, but not for us, say we. The cowslip flavour, redolent of summer mornings, could never survive whipping, that we feel sure. There are some puddings, like green grape, ripe gooseberry, and blackberry, that do not deserve the names of puddings. They are only phantasmagorial experiments. Dumplings rouse tender memories, and open a wide field, but we have no room to expatiate on them, nor should we like to rouse the jealousy of Oxford by praising Suffolk, or of Suffolk by praising Norfolk. A hearty man, with a trooper's appetite, can alone eat dumplings. They are not at all the "jockies" for men of intellect and epicures.

Pancakes and fritters — delicious words. Lives there a man with soul so dead, whose heart has never leaped up to see either a rainbow in the sky or a pancake in its aërial somersault? Buckwheat curd and potato fritters are worth trying. Rice pancakes are said to be respectable. Pancakes are far too serious things to be eaten often. They should be reserved for Shrove Tuesdays and birthdays. They hardly seem to count as realities with strong boyish appetites; and we have known youngsters, irritated by lemon and sugar, and the excitement of perpetual hot and hot relays

from the kitchen (where Shrove Tuesday is regarded as a sort of harmless Carnival) to devour a large hat-full.

Desaugiers, in one of his early songs, imitating Master Adam, the cabinet-maker of Nevers, writes with the true gusto of a gourmand:

> Je veux que la mort me frappe
> Au milieu d'un grand repas,
> Qu'on m'enterre sous la nappe
> Entre quatre larges plats;
> Et que sur ma tombe on mette,
> Cette courte inscription:
> "Ci git le premier poète,
> Mort d'une indigestion."

The same gay precursor of Béranger represents Pleasure with full mouth, and slightly inebriated, seated on the débris of a pâté de foie gras. In this same number of the Almanach des Gourmands, 1805, so pleasantly brightened by the gay song, Aussitôt que la lumière, there appears a very philosophical treatise on pastry and pastrycooks, probably by the learned Grimaud de la Reynière himself. Pastry, he says, eloquently, is to cooking what rhetorical metaphor figures are to oratory—life and ornament. A speech without metaphors, a dinner without pastry, are equally insipid, but in like manner as few people are eloquent, so few can make perfect pastry. Good pastrycooks are as rare as good orators. As it is difficult in all history to name more than five or six great speakers, so in the history of the kitchen it is difficult to find more than six or seven great artists. There was Demosthenes, there was Rouget, there was Cicero, and there was La Forge. Pericles spoke well, and the Gendrons baked well. Toulouse and Strasbourg produced great men in foie gras pies. Perigord excelled in partridge pies, Nérac in terrines. The writer then goes on to recommend the art to the notice of beautiful women, it being at once an occupation, a pleasure, and a sure means to preserve or to recover embonpoint and freshness. Another French writer on food is also eloquent on the rolling-pin, and says: "This is an art that will chase ennui from the saddest. It offers varied amusement and sweet and salutary exercise for the whole body. It dissipates obstructions, which are the sources of all disease, and restores us appetite, strength, and gaiety, it gathers round us friends, and tends to advance an art known and revered from the most distant antiquity. Woman, lovely and charming woman, leave the destructive sofas where ennui and hypochondria prey upon the spring time of your life, unite in the varied moulds, sugar, jasmine, and roses, and form those delicacies that will be more precious even than gold, when made by hands so dear to us."

The fact was the author was not half such a fool as he seemed, for French pastry about 1805 had really made some advances, thanks to the skill of Rouget, Lesage, La Forge, and the Gendrons. Before 1800, or so, pastry had been mediævally massive, lumpy, gross, and indigestible. Quantity, not quality, had been regarded. Health had been forgotten. Now chemistry and medicine had stepped in to help the artist to more varied forms, and lighter and more wholesome ingredients and proportions. The stomach and eye were both gratified. Savoury biscuits were found by one stupendous mind to be better when made with potato flour. Spun sugar assumed a European importance. Meringues stuffed with fruit and red and yellow ice creams grew into public favour. Central mountains of sugar grew more common at desserts. Philosophers in 1805 went so far as to assert that the consumption of pastry in Paris had doubled within twelve years. The new habits of the Revolution led to discarding heavy suppers, and taking to light but very expensive teas—teas that sometimes ran up to three hundred francs. A fashionable tea required at least a dozen dishes of pastry. At dinners, too, pastry was indispensable. Frangipane tarts, Fanchonnettes, Genoises, Ramequins de Bourgogne, and flan de pommes à l'Anglaise. These, alternating with entremets, gave a relief to the table, an éclat, a ravishing coup d'œil; and then came the dessert in moulded sugar; rocks and temples, in which architecture, painting, and sculpture combined their labours, while gay fireworks fizzed over all.

AN ENTREMET OF GREAT MERIT.

(*The English sailor à la maître d'hôtel, and the Sea captain au gratin.*)

A cookery book, the property of the last chef of the King of the Sandwich Islands, has lately fallen into our hands. It is a work of great research, and eminently practical. The first recipe struck us as cynically written, but yet showing degrees of scientific thought hardly to be expected from a cannibal. It is entitled The English Sailor à la Maître d'Hôtel. It begins thus: "Take a shipwrecked sailor, not under three-and-forty, flour him and pepper him. Open him down the back, first carefully removing his head, then baste him——"

But here unfortunately the rest of the page is missing, and the rest of the book, being in the New Zealand ancient Golly-Golly character, has not yet been satisfactorily translated by Dreikopf, who hopes, however, in the course of a year or two, to give the world further secrets of cannibal cooking. He has, however, found out that the natives prefer the soles of the feet and the fleshier part of the legs and back of young subjects, not by any means preferring the male. Tarry old boatswains are generally boiled down for soup. Captains, if under sixty, are treated with breadcrumbs, plum sauce, and lemon juice. Shipboys are much relished scolloped, and a baby à la Metternich is said to require only legality to carry its fame to both the North and South Poles.

Dreikopf, in the course of these researches, discovered in some old book of travels in Sumatra, long before the time of Sir Stamford Raffles, a curious custom obtaining among a cannibal tribe there. The tribe in question never let a man live beyond seventy-two without eating him. The way they do it is this:

the relatives of the old gentlemen invite a large dinner party, chiefly of relations, for a certain day and hour, generally selecting some central spot in a spice wood forest—a pleasant, shady, cozy spot, such as we English people would choose for a pic-nic. They all muster there at the appointed time, every man carrying a carved war club, and a bag full of pepper, salt, and lemons. They then, after the usual bows, greetings, and introductions, give the old gentleman (who, dressed lightly for the purpose, treats the whole matter as a peculiar mark of respect, thanks every one all round, and drinks their health in palm toddy) a fair start, and run him up and down till he is rather warm and tolerably tender. In half an hour or so (even if the old gentleman has practised as an attorney) he is sure to be "treed" by the younger and more hungry men. A whoop is then given, and the whole party collect, and sit round the place in a ring—every man, with his leaf of salt, pepper, and lemon by his side, his knife and fork in his hand, and the leaf of a tallypot palm for a table-cloth spread over his knees. Every one then shouts at the same moment, "Dinner time is come. Good night, Mr. ——." The chief mourner runs up the tree, shakes hands with the old party, and drops him down. He is instantly clubbed, and eaten, with "sauce piquante," or "sauce à la bonne femme." Such is the remarkable custom of this very interesting people.

Horrible as cannibalism is, we cannot philosophically, Dreikopf says, regard it as proving devil-worship or utter degradation. It has only arisen from a craving for animal food in islands like New Zealand, far from the mainland, where the few indigenous animals had been eaten out. When the pig and horse were first introduced into New Zealand, we believe there was not a single quadruped existing in the island but some sort of small rat. By eating only enemies taken in battle and slain in hot blood, the New Zealand philosopher probably first reconciled the matter to his conscience, and conquered the natural repugnance of man to such food, which is, however, said by the natives to almost exactly resemble pork, and is therefore generally known to them by the agreeable metonym of "Long Pig."

SAILORS' HOMES.

NOBODY now needs to be told the value of a Sailors' Home, but the officials of the Sailors' Home Society have just been issuing a pamphlet for suggestion to the public that, however possible it may be, in some respects, to have too much of a good thing, these homes are among the good things of which we have not enough. The crimp will never be extinct, but escape from him is not yet everywhere possible and easy. Jack at sea lives in a floating monastery, under strict discipline, and subject to unnatural privations. He is effectually cut off from the common life of the world, and when he runs ashore, with all his restraints gone and his pocket full of accumulated earnings, he is so utterly inexperienced, and so naturally ready to make the most of a few days, absolutely free from all restraint, that to seize, beset, and rob him, was the business in life of a considerable number of persons who made that their particular calling in all English ports. This is the recognised and still prosperous profession of a crimp, who seizes his prey often while yet on board ship, hauls the unwary victim to his den, provokes him to every excess, and casts him out in a few days stripped almost, or altogether, to the skin. A sailor, for example, was laid hold of in Shields with thirty or forty pounds in his pocket. A crimp and sailors' lodging-house keeper took possession of him, in the usual way, "took care of his money for him," charging him fourteen shillings a week for his lodging, and, at the end of sixteen days, told him his money was all gone, and claimed also his clothes. Here is a part of the account produced to justify the claim: Dec. 9th. Twenty pints of rum, two pounds six shillings and sixpence; twenty quarts of beer and fifteen ounces of tobacco, fifteen shillings. 10th. Eight glasses of rum and two shillings and sixpence borrowed money, four shillings and sixpence. 11th. Borrowed money, two shillings and sixpence; five pints of rum, five gills of rum, and fifteen quarts of ale, one pound twelve shillings and sixpence; six ounces of tobacco, two glasses of gin, and two gills of brandy, six shillings and sixpence. 12th. Cash, two shillings; fifteen pints of rum, and twenty-eight gills of rum, three pounds; four quarts, half a gallon, and twenty-two gills of beer, one pound three shillings and ninepence; fifteen glasses of rum, and eleven glasses of beer, nine shillings and threepence; pint of brandy and sixteen glasses of gin, eight shillings; thirty-six ounces of tobacco and three and a half glasses of gin, twelve shillings and fourpence-halfpenny. 13th. Eighteen pints of rum, fifteen gills of rum, and twenty-six quarts of beer, three pounds four shillings; twenty-six bottles of lemonade, and twenty-eight gills of beer, one pound; fourteen ounces of tobacco, six glasses of gin, six shillings and twopence; twelve glasses of gingerade and cash, five shillings and eightpence; one week's board, fourteen shillings. Paid for clothes, one pound two shillings and sixpence; two pints of rum, ten gills of rum, and four glasses of beer, sixteen shillings; twenty-four glasses of spirits, nine quarts of beer, and seven ounces of tobacco, fourteen shillings and sevenpence. 15th. Sixteen half glasses of spirits, ten glasses and two gills of rum, and an ounce and a half of tobacco, beer, two shillings and tenpence; fortnight's board, one pound eight shillings; cash, two pounds eighteen shillings: spirits, tobacco, and rum, four shillings and three halfpence; cash, five shillings. 17th. Cash, seven shillings; twenty glasses of spirits and eight quarts of ale, nine shillings and fourpence. 18th. Ale, spirits, and tobacco, sixteen shillings and fourpence.

19th. Thirty-five glasses of spirits and twenty glasses of ale, and two glasses of brandy, one pound four shillings and tenpence. 20th. Ale, tobacco, and cash, seven shillings. 24th, 25th, and 26th. Ale and spirits, seven shillings and elevenpence, and other items.

Captain R. J. Elliott, who, as long ago as 1827, had opened an asylum for destitute sailors, was the first to suggest in this country a distinct arrangement for the wholesome lodging of the sailor and safe keep of his money and clothes. Captain Gambier and others backed the notion, and the first stone of our first Sailors' Home (*our* first, for before the beginning of our movement there were several such homes in America) was laid at London, in Well-street, in the year eighteen 'thirty. But the English public heard or understood so little of the use of such a place, that there was not money enough provided to enable even this one first Home to be opened until five years later. Captain Elliot devoted himself to the work; denying himself social pleasures he set up his own home near the Sailors' Home, and watched over it for about fourteen years. At the end of that time sickness obliged him to cease from active superintendence.

Meanwhile the example had suggested to a right-hearted shipowner, Mr. Richard Green, the establishing at his own expense a home—also in the east end of London, for the men from his own ships. In Liverpool, also, a Sailors' Home was opened. No more than this was done up to the year eighteen 'forty-nine, when Captain Elliot, the founder of the system which had got to make its value felt in all parts of the land, was compelled to withdraw from the superintendence of the Sailors' Home in Well-street.

Admiral Sir W. H. Hall was, in that year 'forty-nine, Captain of H.M.S. Dragon, stationed off the coast of Ireland. The Irish famine added to the miseries of Jack ashore, and Captain Hall, who had studied in America the best efforts made there for the well being of sailors, made a vigorous and successful push for the establishment of a good Sailors' Home in Dublin. The opening of that Home in July 'forty-nine was solely due to his unceasing energy. He received salvage money for having saved a Spanish brig, and gave it all as subscription to the Dublin Sailors' Home. He went personally to the Lord-Lieutenant and heads of departments, worked at the subscription list, gave an entertainment on board ship in aid of the funds, while Mrs. Hall held a bazaar ashore. When he had achieved his good purpose at Dublin he did not rest content, but set to work as indefatigably upon Belfast. He wrote letters to the Chamber of Commerce there, addressed a public meeting, and, by months of hard work, with some zealous co-operation, he so far won on his public, that Belfast set to work, and by the year 'fifty-three was able to open a good Sailors' Home. At Portsmouth his energy bore fruit a little faster. Before the end of the year 'forty-nine, his good Dragon had returned to Portsmouth, head-quarters alike of sailors and of crimps. Nothing had been done there to enable sailors to escape the teeth of the land sharks; the shore accommodation open to them was, we are told, even worse there than at almost any other port. Captain Hall went to work upon Portsmouth, well charged by this time with batteries of hard fact for the crumbling down of prejudice or indolence. Port-admiral and brother captains, true to their profession, generally rallied round him. Captain Sir Edward Parry, and Captain Gambier, were with the foremost workers, and before the beneficent Dragon spread its wings and quitted Portsmouth, the result of its visit to those waters was no longer doubtful. In March, eighteen 'fifty, a public meeting was held, at which nearly all the naval authorities of the port were present, and the Provisional Committee, in its report then presented, felt it a pleasure as well as a duty to record the fact that the present effort to found the Home originated with Captain Hall, of her majesty's ship Dragon, when a short time since at this port. Here was a Dragon flying in the face of all tradition, whose particular business it seemed to be to prevent men from being eaten up alive.

The Portsmouth "Royal Sailors' Home," was opened in April 'fifty-one. One year's experience of its working trebled the number of its boarders. In 'fifty-four, a year of exceptional fulness, it had been trebled again; there was a ninefold increase; and since that date the Lords of the Admiralty have contributed two hundred a year to its support.

When the Dragon left Portsmouth, it went to the Mediterranean, and Captain Hall could only work through the post for maintenance of valid interest in the new movement. But in eighteen 'fifty the Dragon came home again, and the Captain, having paid off his ship, was able to devote his whole time to the work of founding Sailors' Homes. He went north and stirred up generous feeling in the ports of Scotland, secured the opening of Homes in Aberdeen, Dundee, and Greenock, all in 'fifty-one or 'fifty-two; of another at Leith in 'fifty-four, and of another in Glasgow, a very large one, which was tried upon a self-supporting principle, but found to require some public aid, although it is hoped that a hundred a year will be sufficient.

Captain Hall visited also Falmouth, and secured the founding of a Home there, and in the same year went to Devonport, where he was the originator of a Sailors' Home, opened on the last day of the year 'fifty-two, to which the Admiralty grants one hundred and fifty pounds a year. Within the same year he had secured also the founding of such a Home in Bristol. He went off to Wales, and set Cardiff to work. The Cardiff Sailors' Home and that which the people of Hull were stirred up to establish were both opened in the year 'fifty-six.

The Sunderland men needed no prompting, and the Home they built in 'fifty-two required enlargement three years afterwards. The Sailors' Home at Dover was established by the

exertions of a clergyman of the place. The Home at Cork was started by another captain in the navy. Yarmouth opened its Home in 'fifty-eight. The Southampton people needed a good deal of prompting and persuading; but when they did set up their Sailors' Home, in eighteen 'sixty-one, it was an excellent one; and in 'sixty-five the Mayor, Municipality, and Committee of the Institution, gave public thanks to Captain Hall—then Admiral Hall—for the important service he had done the port in urging and securing its establishment.

The example set in England has been operative throughout all her colonies. Sailors' Homes have been established at Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Hong-Kong, Shanghai, Kingston in Jamaica, Mauritius, the Cape, and the ports of Australia. The indefatigable apostle of a system which has done incalculable service in the saving of life, health, worldly well-being, and other sources of happiness to many thousands of the men upon whose labour England depends for no small part of her own wealth, has begun with his charity at home, but has no wish that it should stop there. He has also personally urged the advantage of the Sailors' Home system upon the French Minister of Marine.

But our own work is not yet half done, and it is for the good of his own country that Admiral Hall is still actively working at the head of an organisation called "the Sailors' Home Society," which has its office at 6, New Inn-street, with Mr. John Davies for its Honorary Secretary, and Admiral Sir William Hall for its Chairman and Honorary Managing Director. At this particular time it is hard at work upon two endeavours. One is, to set up a Home which is much wanted at Weymouth for the seamen of the Royal Navy. Th other is, to add to the two Homes, which are all that have been yet provided by the great and wealthy port of London, another on the south side of the Thames, at Rotherhithe. As to the need there, it is enough to say that at present there is no such thing as a Sailors' Home to be found on the south side of the river, where accessible lodgings are immeasurably squalid, and the docks—though less important than those of the north side—receive as much shipping as almost any port in the kingdom.

THE ABBOT'S POOL.

IN SIX CHAPTERS. CHAPTER V.

I feared the pitiless rocks of ocean,
So the great sea rose, and then
Cast me from her friendly bosom,
On the pitiless hearts of men.
MISS PROCTOR.

THE room was dimly lighted by a low fire and a tallow candle, and, besides its usual stuffy and druggy atmosphere, Mrs. Denbigh was conscious of a smell of stale tobacco, emanating apparently from the great arm-chair, where sat, in an easy lounging attitude, a tall, powerfully-made man dressed in a loosely-fitting shooting-jacket. Starting up as Mrs. Denbigh entered, he displayed a bronzed and reddened face set in a rough mass of beard and hair, and a pair of gloveless hands, toil-seamed and weather-beaten. Mrs. Denbigh might well stand still, half-alarmed at this uncivilised apparition; and the stranger also looked somewhat surprised, as if the fair vision before him, in sweeping black velvet robes, with heavy silver pendants on the round throat and in the small ears, were not quite what he had expected the doctor's wife to be. In another second he bowed with a sudden courteous gesture, which assured Elsie that he was not the ruffian he looked, and, with a frank pleasant voice, the tones of which were much more civilised than his appearance warranted, he said, "I beg your pardon; I am afraid I have come at a most inconvenient moment. Mr. Denbigh is not at home, I am sorry to find?"

"No," said Mrs. Denbigh, standing herself, and not asking him to sit, as she still felt somewhat nervous; "I am sorry to say he is in London; but we expect him home to-morrow, or the next day, at latest. Could you leave any message?"

"Thanks—no. I fancy you can tell me what I want to know as well as he could; it is only Captain Clavering's address."

Elsie gave a great start, as well she might. Her first wild idea was, that this stranger was bent, for some inscrutable reason, on paining and insulting her by a cruel joke. Next moment she was able to consider that he might be some old friend of her first husband, who did not know that Philip Denbigh's wife had been Herbert Clavering's widow. Sudden shame assailed her, as if she had done something wrong and disgraceful which was on the point of being discovered; her intense desire to be quit of her visitor nerved her to answer collectedly.

"You don't know, then, that he was in the Amethyst, which was lost seven years ago?"

"Exactly; that's the man. When we parted at Auckland, he told me that Mr. Denbigh was his greatest friend, and that if I should chance at any time not to know his address it was a sure find to come and look him up here. He is a great chum of mine. I dare say my name is familiar to you—Josiah Smith."

There came before Mrs. Denbigh's mind a sentence in poor Herbert's first letter, in which he mentioned having given a passage in the Amethyst to a certain acquaintance, bearing this name, who wished to make his way to New Zealand. Shame, distress, the fear of Philip's jealous anger, and the horrible awkwardness of her situation, were all forgotten in the chance of questioning one who had been with her husband so shortly before his death. She eagerly exclaimed:

"Oh, yes; I do know your name. Did you not sail in the Amethyst? And was it long before the shipwreck that you parted? You know she was wrecked."

It was the stranger's turn to look surprised. "Of course she was, the wretched tub; not fit

to send a dog to sea in, let alone Christian souls. It was I who was with Clavering on the island; and after we got to New Zealand we parted, and I have never heard from him since. As his good luck would have it, the mail steamer for home started the very day we landed, and he would go off in her, without waiting even to buy new clothes. It seems to me," wound up Mr. Smith, with his pleasant smile, "that we are at cross-purposes somehow."

Whence comes the marvellous strength which springs up in the human heart in times of intense emotion? Who has not felt the numbness which comes over the soul at such moments, leaving us free to act, but taking away, for the time, all power of feeling? It was thus with Elsie Denbigh. While she never doubted that she was on the brink of some awful discovery, she was not conscious of any keen suffering, but acted her part, as one often does in dreams, taking everything with a stolid calmness, and looking at herself from the outside, as it were, all the time, vaguely wondering at the whole position and at her own composure.

Her soft voice was even more subdued and quiet than ever as she said:

"Will you sit down? I do not understand you quite."

She seated herself, bringing her chair close to the table which divided them, and instinctively leaning her head on her hand, so as to shade her face.

"Now will you tell me, please, about yourself and Mr. Clavering? You were in the shipwreck, I think you said?"

"Queer!" thought Mr. Smith. "Mr. Denbigh doesn't gossip much to his wife about his friends' affairs. I suppose I am in for it now, and I must set her curiosity at rest before she will take the trouble to hunt out Clavering's address for me."

"I should think I was!" he answered aloud. "Ah! it was a horrible business! I hope you may never see anything like it, Mrs. Denbigh."

"I heard it was a fearful storm."

"You may say that. Not fit to talk to a lady about. Then came I can't tell you how many hours' tossing about in an open boat. Clavering and I and a few others, in such a sea! It is of no use making a horrible story of it. The end was, that in the pitchy darkness we drove right upon a rock, and our boat was smashed, and out went we! Yah! it is not nice to think about, even now. It was a horrible night that I spent, clinging to the rock, half in the water, wondering all the time how soon I should be washed off, and whether I was the only one left alive. When morning dawned at last, there was Clavering near me, all the other poor fellows gone! We were on a long reef of rock, and we managed by degrees to scramble along it to the island, which was only a big rock itself. We had nothing to eat but seals, which are not dainty food; but somehow we managed to keep body and soul together for more than two years."

He paused; but there was no word, no movement on the part of the listening figure opposite. He went on,

"We were carried off at last by a ship from New Zealand that came in search of seals; and then, as I told you, we said good-bye to each other, and I went up the country, and Herbert Clavering set off home. I have never heard from him, or of him, since. Can you give me news of him?"

"No," she said; "I know nothing of him. I can tell you nothing."

"Curious! Surely Mr. Denbigh must have seen him since he came home? I know he got to England all right; at least I know his ship did, for I chanced on an old Times long afterwards, and saw the day of her arrival mentioned. The 14th of January it was—this identical day three years, by-the-by."

The 14th of January! This day three years! The eve of her wedding day! But still Elsie seemed to feel nothing, and to realise nothing. One question she must ask. She could not look beyond it.

"I know nothing about it," she said again; and the slow measured voice sounded in her ears strangely unlike her own. "But will you tell me one thing. I have heard—I mean they used to say—that Mr. Clavering's wife gave him a ring on the day they parted. Can you tell me if he ever wore it?"

"Oh, yes! Clavering had a ring—a very valuable ring—a ruby, I think. I used to tell him it was lucky he had some money sewn up in a girdle round his waist, when we were cast adrift; for I believe he'd have stayed away from home for ever, rather than have sold that ring to pay his passage, poor fellow! Perhaps," said Mr. Smith, brightening with a sudden idea, "you can tell me where to find Mrs. Clavering, if Clavering himself is not in England."

In one second of time her mind surveyed all the circumstances of the past. She remembered the stranger, whose curious travel-stained appearance had struck old Isott; she saw before her, her husband's white scared face on the bridal morning; she thought of his fury when she discovered the fatal ring; she acted over in her fancy the scenes of his illness; she recalled his various eccentricities, the restless jealous dread; and she never for one instant doubted the abyss of guilt and misery that was suddenly opening at her feet. She knew now, that Herbert had landed in England on the day before her second marriage; she knew that he would rush home at once; she knew that he would not pass his old friend's door without stopping for a moment, if only to ask where she was; she grasped the whole horrible reality! When Mr. Smith began to speak again, his voice seemed to mix with the distant noise made by the romping children, and both sounds became merged in the roaring of the sea, the sea which had spared for a harder fate the man who had loved her, and whose love had been his doom. Just conscious enough to know that consciousness was leaving her, she rose hastily, all her powers concentrated on the effort to leave the

room while she could; but she found the floor heaving under her feet, and fell heavily to the ground.

At the sound of the fall, old Isott bounced into the room, and was quickly followed by Mr. and Mrs. Carter. Mr. Smith had promptly raised Mrs. Denbigh in his arms, and stretched her, insensible, on the sofa.

"What have you been a doing of to her?" asked the old servant, looking fiercely at him, as she turned her mistress's head to meet the cold air from the window, which the vicar had hastily opened; "another telegraph clerk you be, I war'nt," she went on muttering. "Drat they nasty telegraphs. I can't think how gentlefolks can encourage such things, as if bad news didn't travel quick enough by post."

"What is it?" asked Mrs. Carter; but Isott inconsistently interrupted her.

"Don't ye ask 'un, ma'am, for goodness sake, or we'll never bring her to. Get out of the way now, sir, do'ey; we can't bring her round not till we've a got her to ourselves, Mrs. Carter and me."

"Stay," said the vicar, "I had better carry her at once upstairs. She has had a heavy fall," he said to his wife, "and the sooner you can get her into her bed, the better."

"Can I be of any use?" asked the unlucky Smith.

The vicar declined his help, and, lifting poor Elsie, carried her up the stairs, his wife running before them with a candle, to prepare her room. Isott was following, but stopped, bethinking herself that she must not leave the lower part of the house and the vicarage children, to the mercy of this evil-disposed unknown.

"I had better go, I think," said the visitor. "I will call to inquire for Mrs. Denbigh to-morrow. Perhaps Mr. Denbigh may be back by that time."

"You can please yourself," said Isott, rudely, for she was very angry, though she hardly knew at what. "Master 'll be here to-morrow, please the powers, and you might a' waited, whatever your business may be, not coming a frightening my poor missus out of her senses, enough to give her her death."

"But I do assure you, my good woman, I haven't the least idea what made your mistress faint," said the tormented man, goaded into self-defence. "I do assure you I never said a word that could annoy her. I only came to ask for the address of an old friend of mine, who is a friend of Mr. Denbigh too—Captain Clavering."

Isott had bustled to the window, and was closing the sash, but at these words she turned on the speaker like a tigress:

"And who be you, I'd like to know, coming a tormenting my poor dear, master not here to see after her, wi' talking about her dead husband."

"Her dead husband!" cried Mr. Smith, aghast.

"What, don't ye see it yet? Bless ye, can't ye see even yet what 'tis you've gone and done? I tell ye, Cap'n Clavering be dead, poor gentleman—drownded, and Mr. Denbigh's wife were Cap'n Clavering's widder. Now you know."

The vicar came hastily down-stairs, and desired Isott to go to her mistress, adding that she was recovering her consciousness, though she was deadly cold.

"Anything wrong with Denbigh?" he asked anxiously of the stranger; but Mr. Smith did not hear, and stood staring straight before him. He started when Mr. Carter repeated his question, and said, in a rapid, bewildered manner: "I know I am in the way here, but I can't help it. You are the clergyman of the parish, are you not?"

"I am," said the vicar, surprised.

"And a magistrate? Then can I speak to you. I am sorry, but it is business of frightful importance."

Mr. Carter went into the drawing-room, where the children were clustered together, vaguely excited and alarmed. Hastily directing one of the servants to escort them to the vicarage, he returned to the parlour, where the unknown still stood in the same fixed attitude. The vicar could not help feeling rather nervous, especially as the man's first act was to close the door carefully, shutting them in together in the dismal little room, where the fire had nearly burnt out, and the candle had guttered away into a deplorable mass of half melted tallow. But the first word he spoke enchained the vicar's attention, and the two sat on in earnest conversation for a length of time, until the last spark of fire had died away, and the cold moonlight filled the room. It was nearly midnight when their conference was brought to an end by the stealthy opening of the door, at the sound of which both started like guilty creatures. It was Mrs. Carter who came in, her face white and scared by the dim light of the candle which she carried. She looked with marked surprise at the stranger, and then at her husband. To the latter she said: "Can you come and speak to me one minute?" And, when they were in the passage, she went on in a low voice:

"Can't you get rid of that man? I had no idea he had been closeted with you all this time. What can you have been talking about? Oh, John, has anything dreadful happened?"

"I will tell you by-and-by."

"Shall we telegraph for Mr. Denbigh?"

"We must wait till the morning. The telegraph office does not open till seven o'clock."

His wife hurried back to the room where poor Elsie lay.

"I had better go now," said Mr. Smith; "I will call at your house in the course of the day; and meanwhile I had best do nothing—take no steps; don't you think so?"

"By all means do nothing until we see our way more clearly. If, on making inquiries, we should discover that the poor fellow never did land in England, but died on the voyage—

which may be, though it is odd if so, that we never heard about him from any one—if this should turn out to be the case, why then nobody hereabout need be the wiser, and we shall save gossip. Let your inquiries at a distance be made first, at all events. And I should like to lay it all before Denbigh to begin with."

"Really?" exclaimed Mr. Smith, with a shrewd half-wondering glance at Mr. Carter's face. "You would like to lay it before—? Well, we can talk of that to-morrow. Good-by."

He left the vicar to his own solitary thoughts. Melancholy thoughts they were, as he sat by the hearth in the drawing-room, where the servants had kept up the fire, and where candles were burning. From time to time one of them came stealthily in to replenish the fire, and presently they brought some tea; and then a ring at the bell announced the nurse who had been sent for, and finally arrived Mr. Scott, to whom, for the time being, Mrs. Carter resigned the management of the sick room. Soon after, she came into the drawing-room, where her husband, exclaiming at her white looks, wheeled an armchair to the fire for her, and hastened to pour her out a reviving cup of tea.

"How is Mrs. Denbigh?"

"Very, very ill, I am afraid. Her state is so unnatural, that it terrifies me. Through all these hours she has not once spoken, has scarcely moved, and is as cold as a stone. It is like trying to warm a corpse. O, John, what is it? Whatever it is, I believe she has received her death blow."

"She has had frightful news. It is a long story."

And then, drawing his seat close to his wife's, the vicar told her all that Mr. Smith had told him.

After the first exclamation of astonishment, she listened quite silently, with none of the questions and comments with which she was at times wont to try her husband's patience. Long after he had ceased to speak, she remained looking into the fire, until he began again:

"There are three things, to my mind, any one of which *may* have happened. He may have died on the voyage; that we can easily ascertain. Or, coming home and finding poor Elsie married, he may—foolishly, poor young fellow, and wrongly, too—have resolved to keep out of her way, and never let her know of his existence."

"Not like Herbert Clavering," said Mrs. Carter, shaking her head.

"The third conjecture is the worst of all; but I am afraid it is the most probable. Think of the tremendous blow of finding her married again; he may have destroyed himself."

Mrs. Carter shook her head again, but did not speak. Her husband said impatiently: "You always have an idea in your head; tell me, Mary, what you think? I see you have some belief about this matter."

"No, no; indeed I have not; what grounds have I to go on? Did you say that this man was quite sure that the steamboat reached England?"

"Yes; he saw the date of her arrival mentioned in a newspaper; he says, it was the 14th of January, this day, three years.'"

"What? Have you forgotten what happened on the 15th of January in that year? I know I am not mistaken. I never forget Elsie's wedding day, because it is Johnny's birthday—a year old he was—don't you remember? Oh! John."

Her husband uttered a sound of sorrowful surprise, as if much impressed.

"It seems extraordinary," he muttered, "that the poor fellow should not have rushed straight home. Could he?—I suppose—I wonder—whether he could have come into the neighbourhood — to Slowcombe, perhaps — and heard——"

The vicar spoke slowly, and his wife watched his face as he knitted his brows, and passed his hand over his forehead, groping his way towards the conclusion at which her quicker feminine instinct had already arrived. When he raised his eyes, he met hers fixed upon him, as if she half hoped, half dreaded, to hear from him a suggestion that she could not bear to make herself.

"What are you thinking of, Mary?"

"I am thinking," she answered, with a lowered, and an agitated voice, "that the short cut for any one walking from Slowcombe, passes this very door. I am thinking how Herbert Clavering first came to Sedgbrook, and how very fond he was of Mr. Denbigh. And, oh, John! I can't help thinking of Mr. Denbigh's face on his wedding morning."

"You are not supposing surely that those two met? That Denbigh knew of Clavering's being alive? Preposterous! Why should Clavering keep out of the way, if he came before the wedding? And, even if he were so terribly misguided, how can you suppose Denbigh to be so utterly vile as to let him? A man of his proud sensitive nature, upright to a fault."

He stopped short. For, his wife, with a smothered exclamation, laid her hand upon his arm, and he saw the horrible thought that had just darted into his own mind, reflected in her frightened eyes.

CHAPTER VI.

Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small:
Though with patience He stands waiting, with exactness grinds He all.

LONGFELLOW.

"How is she?" asked Mrs. Carter of old Isott the following day.

"She's living yet, but the Lord 'll take her to Hisself, poor lamb, afore long, there can't be no doubt. Her poor baby be gone before her."

"The baby born? Born dead?"

"Never breathed, poor dear: a boy. Poor missus went off into them fearful convulsions so soon as he were born, and, since they be gone off, she have never noticed nor asked nothing; and Mrs. Baker, she up and telled her at last as how 'twas gone, thinking to rouse her; but you might just as well try to rouse a stone."

"When do you expect Mr. Denbigh?"

"Master can't be here yet awhile," said Isott, her shrewd old face suddenly assuming an utterly expressionless stolidity. "By the very last train to-night, p'raps; but I can't say noways."

"I should like to see her, if I might," said the lady, advancing into the passage; but Isott did not move.

"The house to be kept so quiet as possible; them was our orders," she remarked, looking straight before her: so decided a hint that Mrs. Carter could only stop short, and say, as she prepared to depart,

"Then I must not come in, I suppose? But if she should get conscious by-and-by, pray think of me!"

Isott gave her promise with the cheerful alacrity of a person determined beforehand to break it; and slowly and sadly Mrs. Carter turned away. Then Isott, without returning to the sick room, betook herself to the parlour, and sat down close to the window, whence she could see up and down the lane. It was not very long before the swing of the gate and the sound of a quick decided step on the gravel made her look eagerly out, and, before the bell could ring, she had flung open the door, and stood face to face with her master. His upright figure looked more full of vigour than ever after the exhilaration of his five miles' walk, and his face was brighter than usual with the pleasure of returning home. Walking from Slowcombe by the footpath across the fields, he had heard no ill tidings, and, with a hasty nod to Isott, was striding past her, hurrying to find his wife, when the old woman seized his arm in a grip which had a moral if not a physical power in it he could not resist, drew him into the parlour, and closed both doors.

"Master Philip," she said, unconsciously returning to the nursery language of old days, "'tis all a come out. There was a gentleman here last night, and he's telled 'un how Cap'n Clavering wasn't never drownded at all; and how he did come home last January was three year'; and the vicar do know it, and Mrs. Carter do know it; but they shouldn't a talked without seeing as the door was fast, when they was talking about your business, and I not so very far off. I made so bold as to open your letter to missus this mornin', and when I did see as you was a goin' to start afore you could get that there telegraph, and get here afore you was expected, it did zim quite a Providence."

Isott never looked at her master, while she hurried out these words; she was studying the hem of her apron, and trying hard to control her violent trembling. If she had looked up, she would have seen a grey shade pass over Mr. Denbigh's always pale face; but his voice was as steady as ever, as he sternly asked:

"Are you gone out of your mind?"

"No, Master Philip," she said, speaking more calmly, "that I b'aint, and you do know as I b'aint, right well. I don't ax no questions 'bout that there stranger as come the night you knows of. I don't ax ye nothing at all about it; 'tis all between your conscience and God A'mighty; but they'll be after ye—they will—so sure as you be alive—and here's twenty pounds as Jonathan and I 'll never ax ye for again—and take my advice, do ye now, and go off—go off to once—that'll pay your journey—for I do love ye, my dear," she wound up, bursting into piteous sobs and tears, "I do love ye. I always did! Oh! don't ye, don't ye bring my grey hairs wi' sorrow to the grave."

The pathos of passionate earnestness in the old woman's voice made a strange contrast to her master's still self-contained manner.

"Where is your mistress?" he asked, in his quick hard tone, just pushing away the hand which Isott held out to him, clutching her hard-earned savings.

"Missus? Oh, sir, do 'ey go, do 'ey go to once! 'Tain't no use thinking of missus, sir; she won't know ye."

"She is ill!" he said; and was striding to the door, but Isott threw herself between him and it, and seized his arm again.

"Take my advice, sir, do ye. Poor missus 'on't be here long; but if she could speak, I know her last words 'ould be, go, go! The Lord 'll take her to hisself, sir, as he have the poor dear baby; but you, oh, do ye be off to once, or right or wrong, they'll hang ye, they will for certain."

He had stood like a man petrified while she spoke of his wife's state, but when she recurred to his own affairs he impatiently interrupted her.

"Let me go to your mistress."

Isott, stalwart old peasant as she was, found herself thrust aside by one push of his hand, and he hurried from the room and up the stairs with long noiseless steps.

There was no sound in the darkened room, for Mr. Scott, after hours of devoted attendance, had left the house for a little while, promising to return to meet the physician who had been telegraphed for from Briswick. The old nurse kept watch alone. She rose as the door was opened, and the husband walked up to the bedside, and there stood, gazing heart-stricken at the sight before him. The convulsions which had racked his wife's frame for hours, had spent themselves at last, but Philip's experienced eye saw in a moment that all hope was gone. He saw that there was death in the heavy nerveless attitude of the straightened limbs, death in the laboured breath, death in the white face. The nurse, struck with pity

at his dumb despair, began to whisper some common-place form of consolation; the sense did not reach him, but the sound brought him to the consciousness that she was present, and he signed to her to leave the room. Reluctantly she obeyed, and, as the door closed upon her, Philip Denbigh's self-control was lost in overpowering agony; he sank on his knees, and buried his face on the bed with a bitter groan.

Elsie's extreme exhaustion had probably made her appear more dead than she really was to the outer world, for she stirred at the sound, and he saw the ashy lips quiver, and a fluttering consciousness dawn on the white face; then she opened her eyes, and looked at him: first with a blank vacant gaze, then something of the old beaming look which always welcomed him; then with an expression of overpowering horror, as she feebly turned her head and tried to hide her face in the pillow. All he saw at that moment was, that there was life in the movement, and he bent over her, holding to her lips a spoonful of some cordial that stood near the bed. But she would not move to take it, and as he implored her to do so in passionate caressing words, the sick horror in her face deepened, and she gasped, feebly:

"I can't; I am dying. Thank God!" Then, collecting all her strength, she looked full at him, steadily and fixedly, until his eyes dropped, and his head sank under her gaze. In a stronger voice, and with unnatural calmness, she asked, "Philip, did you kill him?"

Her husband scarcely started at the words; it seemed to him that he had acted the whole scene already, and knew beforehand what she was going to say. In that stupendous moment he felt that he could no more lie to his dying wife than he could form his lips to tell her the dreadful truth. Again he sank on his knees and hid his face.

"Oh, my poor Herbert—my poor, poor Herbert!"

He could not endure that her last thought should turn to the man who had been his rival, and whom he hated because he had injured him.

"Elsie!" he broke out, in a smothered voice of passionate emotion, "it was done for you; I have so loved you—and now you hate me! Oh God! I am punished—I lose you—in this world —I lose you in the next!"

"No, no," she cried. And her hand wandered to her forehead, as if she were trying to seize some idea that was escaping her. "I can't say it; the words won't come. God can forgive everything — everything — even that——"

Obeying his wild unreasoning impulse to grasp his treasure and hold her back from the destroying angel, Philip bent over her, and threw his arms about her, longing unutterably to win from her one look, one kiss, such as she had used to give him—such as could never, nevermore be his whether she lived or died. As he took her cold hand it drew shiveringly back; she shrunk into herself to escape the clasp of his arms; and, with a last effort, turned away to avoid the touch of his lips.

Mr. Scott and the Briswick physician arrived. After their first sorrowful greeting to Mr. Denbigh, they began to talk in whispers, appealing now and then to the husband as to a brother doctor; but he stared at them with a vacant expression, and soon sat down, like a man stunned, on the sofa at the foot of the bed, laid his arms on the table before him, and buried his face. The medical men could only stand and look on mournfully, feeling their powerlessness to help her, and deeply touched by the sight of the fair young dying face. Sounds of village life now and then came in through the opened window; once old Isott crept in with her tear-stained face and took her station by the bedside. Still the husband never moved. His whole soul was absorbed in two ideas, each full of overwhelming agony—that his wife was dying — and that her last conscious act had been to turn away from him with horror.

He knew, sooner than any of the other watchers when the faint breathing ceased; but, though his heart gave a bound as the awful stillness sank over the room, he did not stir until a hand was laid upon his shoulder, and it was whispered to him that all was ended. Then he rose, and, with staggering steps, went to the bedside, and stood leaning against the wall, unable to support himself. Presently he became aware that the attendants had left him alone with the dead; and then, and not till then, as he threw himself upon her, there broke from him, with an exceeding bitter cry, the words:

"My God! my God! Have I sold my soul for this!"

An hour later, when the last sad arrangements had been made, and the darkened room had acquired that chill stiff neatness which is one of the accompaniments of death, the nurse and Isott were surprised to see him come in. There was that in his face which sent the scared women out of the room, appalled at the sight of his anguish. He stood motionless for some minutes, looking fixedly down on the cold white face which had lately been so beaming with happiness, which had been so lovely, and so dearly loved, and to which death was already restoring its usual calm and sweet expression.

Presently he spoke, bending over her as if she could still hear him.

"Elsie, I loved you too dearly. I have risked my soul for you: my love has been your curse and your death. But if you can hear me now, you shall know that I love you more dearly than ever. You are mine, mine only, and mine you shall be for eternity as well as for time; and if all you have believed is true, and if God can forgive, and if disgrace, and agony, and death, can expiate crime, I will meet you again, Elsie. And when we meet again, you will not turn from me as you did

this day. Over your body I swear it, my darling. Oh! my poor murdered darling."

He spoke solemnly, as if binding himself by a vow; and then did not attempt to kiss her or to touch her, but departed with one long last look.

Soon after, old Isott, hearing the front door close, ran to the window, and saw her master moving rapidly, but with a strange, uncertain tread, down the lane towards the village. Eagerly she watched, and saw him pass the turn which led to Slowcombe, and straight on into the village street.

The vicar was sitting mournfully in his study, puzzled, and grieved, and anxious, listening to Mr. Smith. The door opened, and as the stranger started to his feet, following the vicar's example, it almost seemed to them that they had raised a spirit from its troubled grave.

Mr. Carter uttered the exclamation:

"Denbigh!"

"You are a magistrate," he said, looking straight in the vicar's face, and speaking slowly as if he were repeating a lesson by rote; "that is why I come to you. Are you looking for Herbert Clavering? Drag the Abbot's Pool, and you will find all that remains of him; he died there on the 14th of January, three years ago."

"By his own hand?"

"By mine. He came to me that evening, when I reached my house in the dark, after my day's work; there he was, standing, waiting, for there was no one in the house to admit him. He told me no one knew of his coming. I should not have known him myself, he was so worn and altered. I had no evil intention then—I call God to witness I had none. He wished to go on at once; but that could not be—it would have killed her. I stopped him; I told him she was away—staying with friends in London. I don't know what I told him—anything to gain time. I set food and drink before him; I gave up my own bed to him; when I had shown him the room, I went back to my sitting-room down-stairs, and there—there—I thought of the next day. I sat and brooded—not for myself—it was not myself I was thinking of, Heaven knows! There was a sound at the door. There he was; he told me he could not rest; that he had rested very little since all his sufferings. He begged me to give him something. He pointed to the surgery door, and asked me if I had nothing there which could make him sleep. Then I saw it all before me; not until that moment; but then, as he stood and looked at me, I felt that I could kill him—that I could trample him down out of my way."

For a moment, the knitted brow and working mouth bore legibly enough the brand of Cain; but his emotion passed, and he went on in the same dead manner:

"When he took it, he asked me, 'Are you sure it will make me sleep?' I answered, 'Quite sure.' And then—afterwards—when it was over—I tied a leaden door weight round his neck and cast him into the Abbot's Pool. That is all I have to tell."

Some days afterwards, the vicar, riding sorrowfully home in the twilight from the magistrate's meeting at Slowcombe, felt his horse start as he turned in at his own gate, and his own strung-up nerves tingled somewhat at sight of a dark figure barely distinguishable from the group of trees under which it stood. Emerging into the road, it came nearer, and he saw that it was his wife, with a shawl thrown over her head.

"I could not help coming out. How has it gone?"

"There could be only one result," said the vicar, sadly, dismounting and leading his horse; "he is committed to take his trial at the next assizes."

"Have they dragged the pool?"

"Yes."

"Does the wretched man feel it, or is he as cast-iron as ever?"

"He says as little as possible, but these last few days have changed him fearfully. His hair is white, and he stoops like an old man. Oh yes, Mary, he does feel it. There is the punishment of Cain upon him, 'greater than he can bear.'"

"Of course he will plead guilty?"

"His only wish, is, that his guilt should meet its full punishment. I half imagine that that absorbing passion, which has ruled his concentrated nature, and warped it so fearfully for evil, is at last turning it to good. I could almost fancy that when he saw his wife die, he realised for the first time that there must be an eternity to set straight the wrongs and sorrows of time. I think he has a strange thought that he will expiate his crime, and meet her again. It is guesswork on my part—he says nothing. But God's ways are wonderful."

"Your sympathies are all with him," cried Mrs. Carter. "Have you no feeling for poor Herbert Clavering? I have been thinking of him, only, all this time. Oh, John, whatever happens to that miserable man, he has deserved it!"

"Who are we," said her husband, solemnly, "that we should judge him? We must leave his body to the justice of man, and his soul to the mercy of God."

They had reached the door of the parsonage, and the vicar, relinquishing his horse to the man who was waiting for it, drew a long breath, and turned into the drawing-room, as if he had done with the subject. His wife felt that he wanted to be cheered after the trying day, but she could not force her thoughts at once out of the mournful channel, and she ran up-stairs for a moment's quiet in her dark bedroom. She looked across the fields, and saw a distant light, shining as she knew at Abbot's Portion in the room of death. She imagined the scene where Elsie lay, white and still, with her baby on her bosom, and where old Isott

sobbed and wept as she folded away the dainty little garments that had so recently been prepared with so much pride and pleasure, never to be worn. The old woman was thinking of another baby whom she had tended, and nursed, and worshipped, thirty long years before; and her faithful heart was breaking.

Mrs. Carter dried her eyes and crossed the passage to her nursery. The fire was burning cheerily, and the three youngest children, fresh and rosy from their evening bath, were gathered around it in their little white dresses, waiting till mamma should come to hear their prayers. A thrill of mingled thankfulness and pain shot through the mother's heart at the sweet home picture. The children wondered why she kissed them so fervently as they clustered round her knee, and why she gathered the little hands so closely into her own as she heard their innocent voices, unconscious of sin and sorrow, lisp out the petition, whose force they so little understood: "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen."

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BY

MR. CHARLES DICKENS.

MESSRS. CHAPPELL AND Co. have the honour to announce that MR. DICKENS will read as follows: Tuesday, December 1, St. James's Hall, London; Monday, December 7, Thursday, December 10, Friday, December 11, Monday, December 14, and Saturday Morning, December 19, Edinburgh; Wednesday, December 9, Tuesday, December 15, Wednesday, December 16, and Thursday, December 17, Glasgow.

All communications to be addressed to MESSRS. CHAPPELL AND Co., 50, New Bond-street, London, W.

NEW SERIES OF ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

THE Twentieth Volume of ALL THE YEAR ROUND being now completed I shall commence, next week, an entirely NEW SERIES of ALL THE YEAR ROUND. The change is not only due to the convenience of the public (with which a set of such books, extending beyond twenty large volumes, would be quite incompatible), but is also resolved upon for the purpose of effecting some desirable improvements in respect of type, paper, and size of page, which could not otherwise be made. To the Literature of the New Series it would not become me to refer, beyond glancing at the pages of this Journal, and of its predecessor, through a score of years; inasmuch as my regular fellow-labourers and I will be at our old posts, in company with those younger comrades whom I have had the pleasure of enrolling from time to time, and whose number it is always one of my pleasantest editorial duties to enlarge.

As it is better that every kind of work, honestly undertaken and discharged, should speak for itself than be spoken for, I will only remark further on one intended omission in the New Series. The Extra Christmas Number has now been so extensively, and regularly, and often imitated, that it is in very great danger of becoming tiresome. I have therefore resolved (though I cannot add, willingly) to abolish it, at the highest tide of its success.

CHARLES DICKENS.

END OF THE TWENTIETH VOLUME.

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